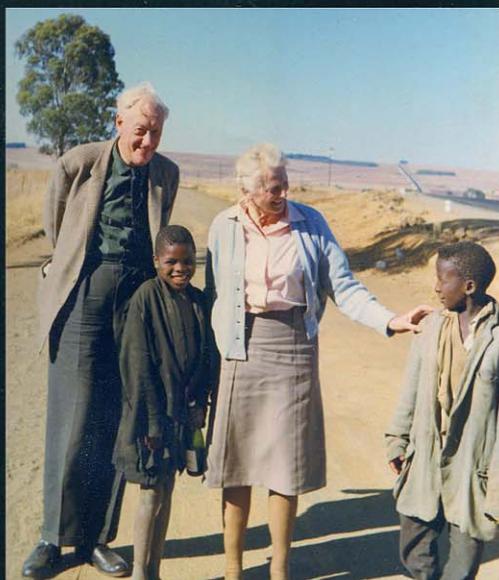


Volume 48 Number 1 Spring 2011

# Conference & common room

The magazine for leading  
independent schools



## Out of Africa

# Exclusive service. Bespoke uniforms.

Exclusive uniforms offering the highest quality in fabrics and design. Easy online ordering with free sewn-in name-tags. Free returns available on all orders. It all adds up to the perfect service



"We are delighted, the students looked absolutely amazing in their new uniforms on the first day back. It was lovely to see them."

Headmaster. The Grange

## 6th Form Suit Collection

- Capsule collection of contemporary designs
- Jacket, skirt and trouser options for girls
- Beautiful polywool, lycra fabrics
- Available in black and navy
- Machine washable



### our partner schools include...

Aiglon  
Alleyn's  
Ashford  
Bancroft's  
Bedford Girls'  
Berkhamsted  
Blackheath  
Casterton  
Christ College, Brecon

Dame Alice Harpur  
Dunottar  
Farlington  
Haileybury  
Hampshire Collegiate  
Heath Mount  
James Allen's Girls'  
Kent College

Kimbolton  
Kings, Bruton  
Laxton  
Northampton High  
Norwich  
Notting Hill & Ealing  
Oundle  
Perse Girls  
Peterborough

Portsmouth High  
Queen Mary's  
Queen Margaret's  
Rendcomb  
Roedean  
Ryde  
Seaford  
Shiplake

The Beacon  
The Grange  
Truro  
Truro High  
Windermere  
Wisbech Grammar  
Woldingham  
Wykeham House  
York Minster



# Contents

Editorial	5
Letter to the Editor	7
<b>Conference</b>	
Sweet Thames, flow softly, <i>Felicity Lusk</i>	8
Body and soul, <i>John Newton</i>	10
<b>Professional</b>	
Mobs' Leviathan, <i>Roger V Mobs</i>	11
Pre-U - a welcome new addition, <i>Ed Elliott</i>	12
University challenge, <i>Chris Ramsey</i>	13
Ten top tips, <i>Geoff Lucas</i>	15
Chill winds in Swedish education, <i>Angela Drew</i>	17
What makes good CPD? <i>Simon Letman</i>	20
Serious fun at Bolton, <i>James Rich</i>	22
Show and tell – sharing best practice	49
<b>South Africa</b>	
Cowboys don't cry, <i>Peter Dix</i>	25
"Education is important. It will make you free." <i>Lorraine Nicholson</i>	28
Sage and Brushwood, <i>Arthur Hearnden</i>	31
<b>In transit</b>	
Astronauts in nautical capital, <i>Ellen Davis</i>	33
Swanning around, <i>Catriona Sutherland-Hawes</i>	43
<b>Parents</b>	
The customer is always right, <i>Sue Bricket</i>	35
<b>Reaching out</b>	
East End to East Africa, <i>Russell Matcham</i>	37
Values and Standards, <i>Peter Pearson</i>	39
A French connection, <i>Paul Spillane</i>	41
Plymouth Rock, not Northern Rock, <i>Stephi Baker</i>	47
<b>Book review</b>	
Over Schooled but Under Educated, <i>Michael Pipes</i>	51
HMC's new international members	53
<b>Endpiece</b>	
Teaching and the Seven Deadly Sins: Envy, <i>Alistair Macnaughton</i>	54



8



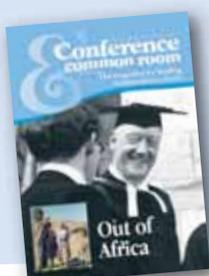
22



35



39



*Robert Birley when he was Head Master of Eton and (inset) in South Africa. See page 31.*



## Excellence in education

**Cambridge Pre-U** is an exciting alternative to A Level for UK schools. It prepares students with the skills they need to make a success of their studies at university.

- Develops independent study skills and in-depth subject knowledge
- Two-year linear courses give teachers flexibility to explore topics in-depth
- Rewarding UCAS tariff
- Designed with schools and recognised by universities

### Learn more!

Visit [www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu](http://www.cie.org.uk/cambridgepreu) or email [international@cie.org.uk](mailto:international@cie.org.uk)



# Editorial

## STEERING GROUP

**STEPHEN COYNE** Chairman  
Head of Foundation, The King's  
School in Macclesfield

**TOM WHEARE** Editor

**ELIZABETH CAIRCROSS**  
Head, Wells Cathedral School

**CHRIS EDWARDS**  
Headmaster, Bromsgrove School

**JAMES PRIORY**  
Head,  
The Portsmouth Grammar School

**BERNARD TRAFFORD**  
Headmaster,  
Royal Grammar School,  
Newcastle

## EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

**DAVID LEVIN**  
Headmaster, City of London School  
Chairman, HMC

**GEOFF LUCAS**  
Secretary, HMC

**IAN POWER**  
Membership Secretary, HMC

**JONATHAN EVANS**  
Managing Director,  
John Catt Educational Ltd  
Business Managers

**DEREK BINGHAM**  
Publishing Director,  
John Catt Educational Ltd

**Publication:** Published three times a  
year, February, June, September.

**Editorial Board:** A steering  
group of members appointed by  
the Headmasters' & Headmistresses'  
Conference.

Opinions expressed in *Conference & Common Room* are not necessarily those of the Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference; likewise advertisements and editorial are printed in good faith, and their inclusion does not imply endorsement by the Headmasters' & Headmistresses' Conference. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recorded or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Editor and/or the Publishers.

### Subscriptions:

£25 for a two year subscription, post paid; discounts for bulk orders available. **Advertising** and

**Subscription** enquiries to the  
**Business Managers:**

John Catt Educational Ltd,  
12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old  
Maltings Approach, Melton,  
Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 1BL. Tel:  
(01394) 389850.

Fax: (01394) 386893.

Email: enquiries@johncatt.com

Printed in England by Wyndeham

Grange, Butts Rd, Southwick,

West Sussex, BN42 4EJ.

ISSN 0265 4458

### Editorial address:

Tom Wheare, 63 Chapel Lane,  
Zeals, Warminster, Wilts BA12 6NP  
Email: tom@dunbry.plus.com



John Catt Educational Ltd is  
a member of the Periodical  
Publishers Association.

Maintenance, as every Head and every bursar should know, is not a luxury but an imperative. It requires coherent and coordinated priorities, inalienable funding and a permanent place in the strategic plan. Every time a school expands, so do its maintenance requirements: every time they are neglected there is a reckoning. Maintenance is your parachute when you find yourself in the free-fall of unintended consequences.

The enemy of maintenance is discontinuity. Amongst the many reasons why politicians have been such poor stewards of education in recent years has been their compulsion to change the rules of the educational game. A school whose board of governors changed its strategy (and, indeed, its title) as frequently as governments have done in the department responsible for education would not flourish. Growth that is not underpinned by appropriate maintenance provision will eventually collapse, something that is true of pensions as well as buildings.

One of the great ironies of the post-war period, when there was a real opportunity to address chronic social problems in Britain, was the failure to implement radical educational reform in this country whilst creating a remarkable new system in Germany. One of the architects of this was Robert Birley, plucked from Charterhouse to become 'the Headmaster of Germany'. Sixteen years later, after his time as Headmaster of Eton, he resumed his educational crusade, this time in South Africa where he actually was 'Red Robert', at least to the Boer bulls.

Some good things did stem from the 1944 Education Act, notably the expansion of the Direct Grant scheme, but, over the past 30 years, successive governments have failed to deliver the consistent strategic provision the state should be making for all its citizens in the areas of education and health. Instead the commitment has been to change, growth and the 'free' market, a toxic combination to which the only antidote is, apparently, a prolonged regime of austere and rigorous purgation.

On either end of Westminster Bridge there stands an iconic building. When the Greater London Council under Ken Livingstone threatened to become as independent of the executive as Southwark, with its stews and theatres, had been in the 16th century, County Hall seemed to offer a South Bank alternative to the Palace of Westminster.

Not all its buildings were of the imperial splendour of Ralph Knott's 1911 design, however. The Island Block annexe, designed by GLC architect John Bancroft, was built between 1970 and 1974. For some time it housed various departments of the Inner London Education Authority, but it slid into dereliction after the ILEA was abolished in 1990.

The six storey concrete hexagon was, regrettably, an outstanding example of the architectural school of brutalism. Though Bancroft had included some innovative features in the design of the building, such as open plan offices and energy saving blinds, it was not listed with the rest of County Hall, but stood like the slowly rotting corpse of a gigantic elephant in the circus ring of one of London's nastier roundabouts. As Wordsworth nearly wrote, 'dull would he be of soul who could pass by' without a shudder.

It has now been replaced by something every bit as much of its age, a glass and chrome palace of the vanities, Park Plaza Westminster Bridge. Much was made of the contrast with the previous year's Conference venue, but the message some brought away from Liverpool and its erstwhile flagship hotel, *sic transit gloria mundi*, should not be ignored in Westminster or the City. The



The UK's Leading Supplier  
of School Minibuses



## Driving Education Further

- D1 & non D1 licence options
- Comprehensive choice of 9 - 17 seat school minibuses
- Mobility options
- Flexible finance Contract Hire and Lease Purchase plans to suit all budgets
- 36 months new minibus warranty
- 12 months no quibble pre-owned minibus warranty
- Full nationwide service and support

**Call 01202 827678**

FORD PEUGEOT CITROËN

visit our new website  
[www.schoolminibuses.com](http://www.schoolminibuses.com)



Fax: 01202 821720 Email: [sales@redkite-minibuses.com](mailto:sales@redkite-minibuses.com)  
Red Kite Vehicle Consultants Ltd, 3 Haddons Drive,  
Three Legged Cross, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 6QU

fashionably dim lighting and conditioned air in the introspective hotel capsule contrasted strongly with what went on at David Levin's uplifting and thought-provoking conference.

It is the general hope and expectation of the present government that the private sector will expand to fill the gaps left by the retreating state. Is this perhaps the game plan behind the Charity Commission's recent burst of activity? Independent schools, stung by the Commission's apparent obsession with bursaries and free places, have proclaimed, with justice, vigour and abundant evidence, their many extramural good works, good works which already fill some of the peri-curricular gaps in the state's provision, as James Rich's article describes.

It is to be hoped that ISC schools will continue to work for the benefit of their wider communities, because it is hard to see how the shanty towns of 'free' schools, parent-run schools and faith schools will provide a coherent educational experience. The notion that free enterprise developments will somehow compensate for the reduction of the proper provision of education by the state is spurious and a milestone on the road to Johannesburg, of which the chairman warned in his opening address.

A South African accent was, unsurprisingly, in evidence at the Conference and the words which echoed longest were 'Truth and Reconciliation'. Whatever the limitations of this process, whatever the problems South Africans still face, the achievement of those who took the first step on this most unlikely road is little short of miraculous. These were people who anticipated the Obama rallying cry, "Yes we can", and delivered on it.

Truth and reconciliation are key factors in human relationships and should be enshrined in the heart of every teacher, every Head, every parent and every governor. Jonty Driver, Peter Dix and Lorraine Nicholson tell us something of the past in South Africa, just as Russell Matcham's article, typical of many published in *Conference & Common Room* over the years, tells us something of the present and, it is to be hoped, a better future.

In a 'house' or 'trade' magazine, it is right that there should be a strong emphasis on professional concerns. Geoff Lucas has regularly contributed articles full of good sense and fair analysis. Heads and teachers scan the horizon for examples of good practice or put recent developments in context. Simon Letman's appointment as HMC's CPD director means that this area can be more precisely targeted and he will contribute regular updates in these pages.

The wide range of activities undertaken by HMC schools is well represented in every issue of the magazine and so is the historical perspective. It is good for schools to look abroad, it is good for schools to touch the infinities of space, but it is also good for schools and the young people they nurture and produce to serve their communities. In the present climate, it is far from clear that the kind of work Clement Attlee once undertook in the East End is no longer necessary.

## Letter to the Editor

Sir, although I am aware that having 11 heads, 22 arms, 22 legs, a drab coloration and some rather unattractive forcipules places the study-dwelling Aitchemcipedes well down the animal 'cuddleometer', I really do think that as the keeper of this often overlooked beast I have some claim against you for neglect.

The September issue of *Conference & Common Room* places the Aitchemcipedes on page 40, neatly sandwiched between the beagles of Radley and the fluffy kittens of no declared abode, and well behind the donkeys and pigs in the Ambridge section earlier in the publication.

The Aitchemcipedes have no need of bowls of milk or a well-filled trough, even though the evidence of its collective body-segments may suggest that too many visits have indeed been paid to such feeding places. What is needed is better recognition of the importance of HMCPD and the role of professional development in helping current and future Heads progress as leaders of our school.

I respectfully suggest, without having anything against any other creature on the planet except perhaps the midge, that future articles on this topic deserve higher priority and perhaps a regular slot within *Conference & Common Room* to inform the readership of what HMCPD can offer and where innovation is taking place, both within and outside our schools.

Yours etc,

**Chris King**

*Headmaster and Chief Executive, Leicester Grammar School and Chairman of the Professional Development Sub-Committee*



# Sweet Thames, flow softly now the Heads are gone

A new Head's Conference diary

My first HMC Conference almost got off to an inauspicious start. Travelling to the eighth floor in the dimly 'mood' lit chrome lifts of the Park Plaza Hotel, I observed male colleagues, their arms adorned with chunky hessian bags. This highly desirable fashion accessory was clearly the It item, so I immediately pressed Descend, determined not to miss out.

"Are you here with your husband?" was the well-meaning enquiry at registration.

"Well, no actually..."

"They're for the spouses..."

"I see, you mean the wives of male Heads?"

"No, spouses," was the careful reply.

"That's interesting," I muttered, seeing the prospect of a bag disappearing. Eventually, after a bit of digging around, a bag was procured from the depths of the registration desk, and later a notice was made to the Conference that anyone who wanted a bag could have one. This was most heartening, I thought: good deed for the day – bags for everyone!

I was soon picked up by my mentor, Adam Pettitt, who couldn't have been more helpful and welcoming. Overwhelmed by the huge number of delegates milling around in reception (HMC is bigger than GSA), I sat down to lunch with 30 or so other newbies. I was surprised how many Heads I knew, and many had links with my school, as Old Abingdonians or former teachers.

With a free afternoon I indulged in cultural pursuits at the V&A, making sure I got back in time for David Levin's positive Chairman's Address, clearly a three-line whip and my first experience of HMC *en masse*. Everyone was welcoming and very friendly, far removed from any lingering impression I might have gained from John Cleese in that classic British comedy *Clockwise*, although I thought that the suits looked much the same, albeit accessorized this year with the coveted hessian bags.

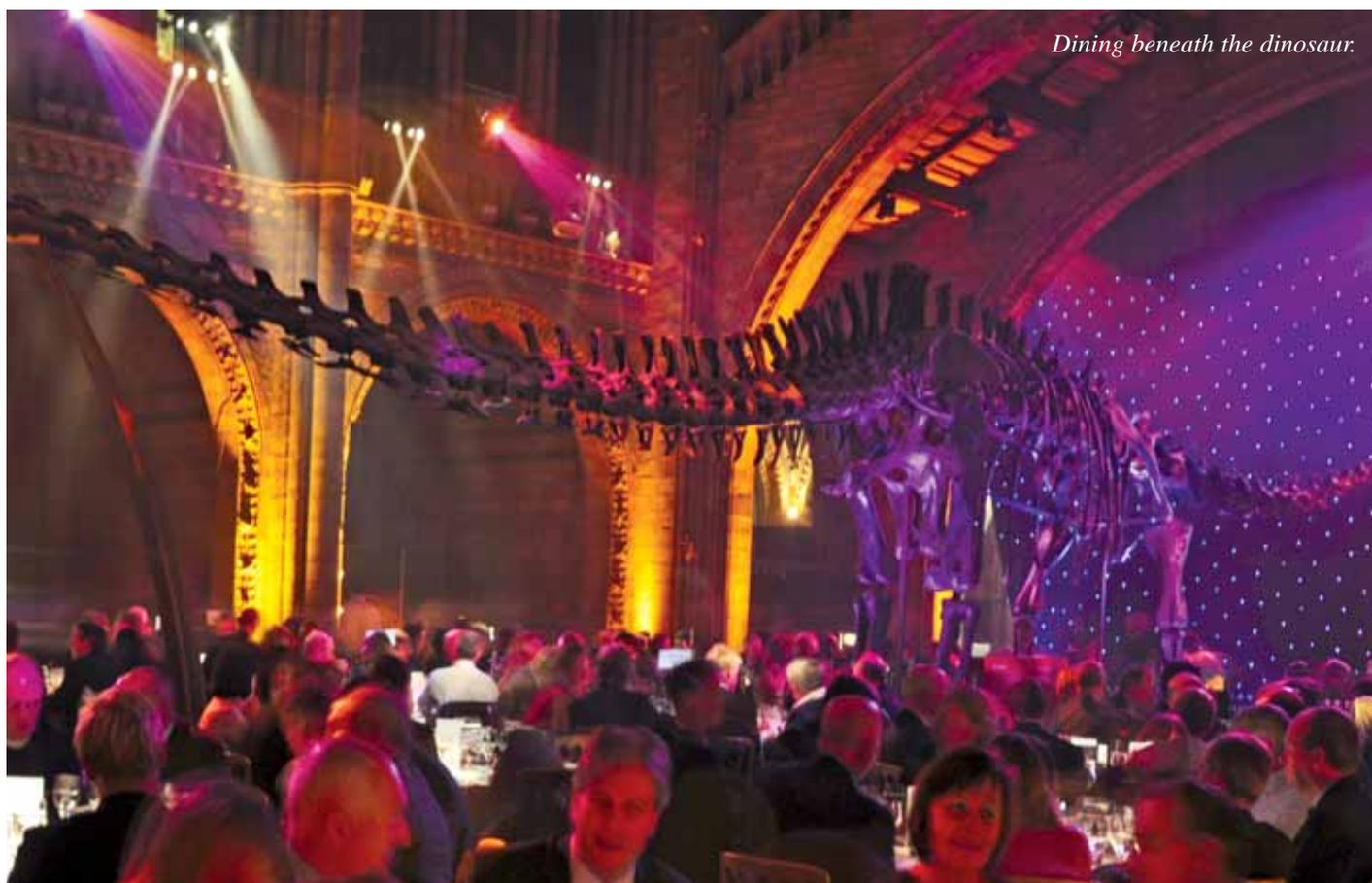
I'd been looking forward to the Riverboat Cruise and Dinner that night, but a recent fire had meant a change of venue to the Natural History Museum to dine under the dinosaurs. Although



Chairman David Levin.



*'...an outstanding example of the architectural school of brutalism.'*



*Dining beneath the dinosaur.*

much was made of the irony of the venue, top marks to Jenny Wilde Associates for successfully relocating the whole conference to such an imaginative venue at very short notice.

Being new, I thought that I was required to attend all the sessions, which I did (mostly) only to find that there is an element of choice about this. I gained something from everything I attended, but would highlight Camilla Cavendish, Andrew Halls and Hamish McRae. I was so impressed by

Hamish McRae that I immediately ordered his book *What Works – Success in Stressful Times*. And Sarah Harper on the impact of demographics on the future lives of our students was enlightening.

Useful, if rather alarming, insights were provided by Geraldine Elliott into the Equality Act 2010, and Michael Gove spoke very convincingly with a complete lack of reference to any notes (although I think that Abingdon comes before Ampleforth in the alphabet) and with quick wit... But the ultimate was Sir Ranulph Fiennes (bought his book too) for sheer inspiration and wonder.

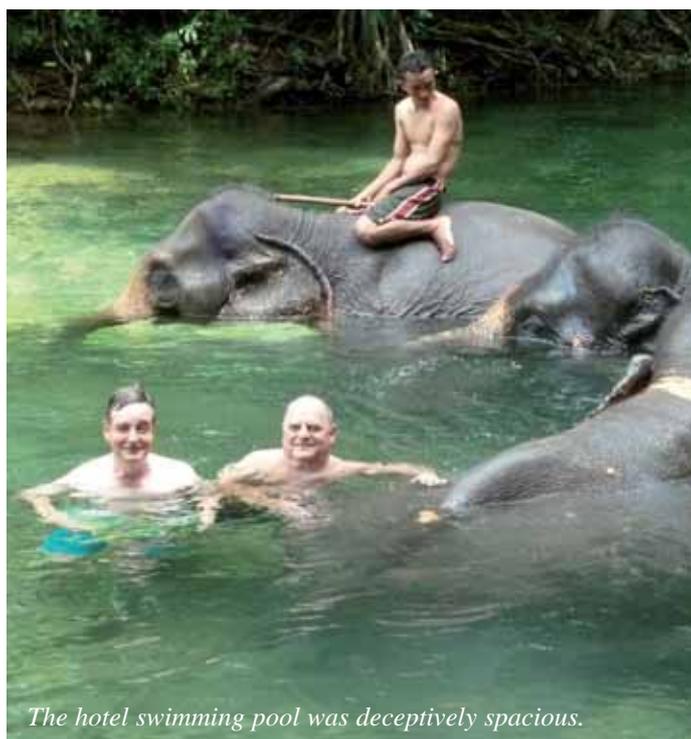
Choral Evensong was rather special at St Paul's Cathedral, although I was initially mistaken for a tourist and, once again, found myself explaining my status as a member of HMC, and I much enjoyed the various receptions and dinners. The main point of any conference must be to talk to other Heads, make new friends and generally put the world to rights. I resisted late nights in the bar but was pleased to be invited.

The only downside for me was the timing of the conference although, as Michael Gove pointed out, we did get him instead of the other lot who were ensconced in their own conference. It's very close to the beginning of term for those of us settling into new posts. I did still have a job on my return, however, and the world had kept ticking over. I don't think that I was even missed.

I came away feeling that I belonged, had enjoyed myself, picked up some new ideas and was now the proud owner of one hessian bag and two more books.

I'm much looking forward to St Andrew's next year, and wonder if I shouldn't perhaps learn how to play golf in the meantime.

*Felicity Lusk is the Head of Abingdon School.*



*The hotel swimming pool was deceptively spacious.*

# Body and soul

John Newton contemplates the work life balance

My wife always makes the same comment when we leave the HMC Annual Conference: “What a truly pleasant, humorous, stimulating bunch of people they are.”

Yes, she means you! One of the joys of long lazy meals at the Conference is the chance to talk to Heads about their other lives, the things that feed the soul, shore up the defences against the tedium and provide the escape.

It is a remarkable job that Heads do. Little did I think when I started my career in 1989 that by 2010 I would have to understand UK visa requirements, library square meterages, planning permission, pension schemes, gang mowers, analysis of local traffic flow and balance sheets.

You could all add to the list of arcane areas in which you find yourself battling as a non-expert to grasp the essence of an issue as it is explained by some besuited and besotted zealot.

The butterfly mind of a dilettante is a crucial asset as we do our jobs day by day, but I am sure that this was not always the case. Heads used to handle the curricular and the non-curricular sides to school life and we had bursars to deal with the vulgar stuff like budgets and building regulations. Then came the 1992 recession and those three dreaded letters began to drop their cold dead hands onto our job descriptions: CEO.

I confess that when asked what I do, I am still adamant that I am a Headmaster, but one with many guises. Your staff want you to be Gordon of Khartoum, your governors prefer you to act like Gordon Ramsey. We are already seeing the next iteration of Headship – the American model of being totally given over to fundraising and alumni work, wowing audiences across the globe with tales of school success in order to rake in the shekels. Flash Gordon, too, then.

I have to say that my blood turned cold when we were asked whether we should be seeking to get into bed with the National College of School Leadership and evolve a qualification for Headship. Fine if it is optional, but disastrous if obligatory. Good Heads, Heads who stay the course, who can still inspire in the twilight years, Heads who can care for their wayward charges even when their own parent is ill or a personal issue is niggling – such folk are not made, but born.

We are ultimately, as we tell our pupils to be, rounded individuals with spiritual, physical, cultural and social needs. We are a whole collection of principles that get us through, armed with touchstones and *bons mots* that we refer to or quote when



*A successful life work balance.*

the chips are down. Mine come mainly from *The Godfather*: “Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer” is, I think, my favourite.

And what other books sit on the bedside table? At a recent meeting of Heads, we opened proceedings with a word from everyone about what they had read over the previous vacation. It was a moment of sanity.

But back to the tedium. How does the working day run? Are you a night owl or an early bird? Do you handle the same piece of paper more than once or are you a desk clearer? Do you have a study or an office? Are you technophobe or technophile? Do you have a PA or a secretary? Or several? Given the choice do you walk, drive, cycle or scooter to work? And then there is the time away. Is it crash out in Corfu or nourish the mind in Madrid? Is it downhill skiing or a fairway in the Algarve?

If you have read this far, you clearly either have very little to do or are very much on top of your brief. My fear about *C&CR* articles is that they can be a little lengthy, so I am going to stop provoking you and go back to our pensions policy. If the Editor permits (*He does! Ed.*), I may return with something from someone out there about how they deal with life at the top. It will be apt for the twitter generation (pithy will be in, wordy out) and provide a few personal reflections for the benefit of the other inmates in our delightful asylum.

*John Newton is the Headmaster of Taunton School.*

# Mobs' Leviathan

## Or Micawber's second law of Domestic Economy

"You want me to be a what, Chairman?"

"You heard, Mobs. A rentagob Head. Someone the broadsheets ring every time they want an education soundbite. A self-aggrandising Kim Jong-il of pedagogy. And for that, Mobs, a Headmaster needs a gimmick. What's your gimmick, Mobs? Are you bombarding our chinless wonders with lessons in Joy and Hunanese, eh?"

"With respect, Chairman, there's no evidence that such lessons are gimmicks so much as..."

"Grow up, Mobs. The day I see English toffs chatting up the totty in Guangxi or feeling one iota chirpier in later life than the rest of us, I'll eat my words. Not until. I want a gimmick, Mobs. I want coverage. Go fetch."

\*\*\*\*\*

One week later, *The Telegraph's* headline could not have been worse if I'd happy-slapped the Teletubbies:

### Public school Head introduces classes in Misery

The Director of Marketing was shaking her head: "Headmaster, I've told you a million times: if you're going to run with the big dogs you'd better learn how to pee in the tall grass. Confucius said much the same thing."

I placed my head in my hands. "But Cassandra, all I said to the lower fifth was that Buddhism teaches us that life is suffering. Who on earth told the press we were running courses in Misery? What *have* I done?"

"You've got yourself a live interview with the BBC, that's what. The Chairman will be thrilled. I just wish your secretary had told Mr Paxman 'we are busy' rather than 'it's a madhouse here'. But properly handled, Headmaster, this could yet be huge. Under your leadership, we will be the first independent school to publicly acknowledge that life is a pile of..."

But the voices in my head had started again.

\*\*\*\*\*

I would rather have stumbled upon Freddy Krueger and Torquemada than the two lower fifth pupils who winked at me from the *Breakfast TV* sofa. To call Tarik Alhizi and Lottie Cribbs subversive imps would be to insult Satan's legions. To know they were about to be interviewed on national TV was akin to knowing one's imminent root canal treatment was to be undertaken without anaesthetic.

"Pleased to see us, sir?" chirruped Tarik. "Or are you suppressing a desire to beat and choke us?"

I gestured fleetingly at Tarik in a manner unbecoming of a Headmaster, took my seat under the lights and prayed for the end of days. The young female interviewer seemed to be speaking and I heard Lottie respond with earnest fervour.

"I am the troubled offspring of angst-ridden middle class parents," Lottie offered. "To prepare me for inevitable depression, Mr Mobs is teaching me to eat my Smarties one by one with a glass of water. And he tells me that Alzheimer's is

preferable to Parkinson's in later life because it's better to forget to pay for wine than spill it. He really is an inspiration."

"And in my case," proffered Tarik, "I am also eternally grateful to Mr Mobs for allowing me to humiliate myself. Last month I invited fellow pupils to pay homage to the Prince of Darkness rather than attend assembly, but I was puzzled when only pre-prep kids turned up to the ceremony. Then I realised that due to my dyslexia I'd actually invited people to worship Santa. As Mr Mobs so sagely said afterwards: "If you can't spell properly, Alhizi, the future is likely to be carp. Remember that for the rest of your file."

I groaned as a wildebeest groans when torn apart by young leopards. The interviewer was asking Lottie something.

"Would you say, then, that your Headmaster's innovative approach to misery has transformed your lives?"

Lottie looked straight at the camera. She waited until it had framed her in extreme close-up, and then she let a single tear fall. Off camera, I mouthed to Tarik: "What in the name of God is she going to say?" Tarik merely mouthed back: "Isn't live telly great, sir?"

"To call Mr Mobs transformative," whispered Lottie after a sensationally judged pause, "is to miss his spiritual dimension entirely. A great Headmaster like mine is not transformative: *he is messianic.*"

\*\*\*\*\*

"Well done Mobs," wheezed the Chairman, putting down *The Telegraph*, on which the headline 'Pupils call Head "God"' was emblazoned. "I assume the kids wanted recompense for not showing you up as a berk."

"Lottie and Tarik have both received new iPods and tickets to a gangsta rap convention."

"Well good luck to 'em. They've tapped into something. Teaching misery is the future, Mobs. What's not to like? Posh kids need to know that if the Chavs don't get them first, then status anxiety will. God's own country, eh? I'd offer you a drink, Mobs, but I can feel a bout of wind coming on. Off you go."

Just before I reached the door, the Chairman spoke again, with uncharacteristic hesitancy: "Mobs. I ought to tell you that since we last spoke, it looks as if my company will be taken over." He paused and stared out of the window. "By a Chinese conglomerate. I'll be away a bit from now on. Intensive Mandarin lessons. In Schenzhen. Just thought you ought to know."

"Xièxiè", I said. Happily.

*Roger V Mobs is all too familiar with the nasty, brutish and short.*



Ed Elliott

# Pre-U – a welcome new addition to the sixth form curriculum

As the first cohort of pupils received their results for the Cambridge Pre-U this summer, Ed Elliott reports on the progress of the exam against the backdrop of its equivalents

I'm always wary of universal solutions to complex problems, and when it comes to educating a diverse student body across a wide range of subjects, a 'one size fits all approach' rarely works. There are International Baccalaureate and A level fundamentalists who believe that they have the answer to the perfect sixth form curriculum, bespoke solutions that can be bought off a Swiss or Edexcel shelf. Both the IB and the A level have real strengths, but they also have weaknesses too, whether it be compulsory breadth, which is not right for some students, or excessive modularity and the compartmentalisation of knowledge.

At The Perse we have followed a 'mixed economy' approach to the curriculum, allowing subject teachers to select the qualification that best meets the needs of Perse pupils in their particular disciplines. We currently operate a mix of A level (various boards) and Cambridge Pre-U subjects within a timetable that allows sixth formers to study five subjects and the Extended

Project Qualification to provide the breadth of the IB, but with freedom of subject choice. We achieve an international dimension through student exchanges and overseas trips and expeditions.

In our experience, the Pre-U has been a very welcome and successful addition to our mixed economy curriculum. We now have a mix of linear and modular qualifications which spreads student workload across the sixth form. In a purely modular environment, the lower sixth can be very pressured with a nine-month mad dash from GCSE results to AS level exams.

Assuming AS level results are good and with some January modules, the last months of the upper sixth in contrast can be relatively light with just one exam per subject remaining. A Pre-U and A level combination evens out the workload peaks and troughs and, in particular, takes exam pressure off students as they settle into the sixth form and begin to consider university options.

The Pre-U is particularly suited to subjects that require time to

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Ian Hislop visits Ardingly College

Writer and broadcaster Ian Hislop visited Ardingly College, his old school in West Sussex, to unveil a special sculpture, a galvanized wrought iron statue of a pelican preparing to take flight from the school terrace. It was dedicated to former pupils and its site overlooks what's known at Ardingly as The View – miles of beautiful West Sussex countryside.

Millie Wilkins, who is doing a Foundation Year in art at Brighton and Hove City College, designed the statue while in the sixth form at Ardingly, after a school visit to Antony Gormley's studio. The idea for the sculpture's site on the school terrace came about following the coeducational independent school's 150th anniversary in 2008, when Ardingly College set out to recognise formally the contribution that all students, past and present, have made to the school.



acquire skills, such as music, or a depth of intellectual maturity that only comes after two years of sixth form study.

Over the years at The Perse, we have found that the number of A and B grades achieved at AS level in the lower sixth is 10% lower than what students finally achieve in the upper sixth. One of the key reasons for this is that many students, especially in arts subjects, are sitting exams before they have acquired the skills or intellectual maturity needed to realise their potential. The result is a lot of re-sitting, which swells exam board coffers but detracts from other important areas of sixth form life, such as extracurricular opportunities.

We have found that the Pre-U works very well for students entering the sixth form from outside The Perse. These students often come from a wide variety of schools with a myriad of different qualifications. Inevitably, their knowledge base varies and there can be gaps that need filling. It is much easier to fill these gaps over a two year period with a linear approach, than in just nine months for AS level.

Our experience of Pre-U is that it undoubtedly stretches the brightest pupils above and beyond A level. Whilst the creation of the new A\* grade has provided the incentive for top level performance at A level, the Pre-U D1 grade, which sits above A\*, is the ultimate academic accolade, and is something that motivates pupils to pull out all the stops. In an era of apparent grade inflation, the D1 grade is a welcome addition that will be valued by both selecting universities trying to differentiate between top students, and sixth form teachers who want to set talented students a genuinely challenging target.

Perse students report that Pre-U, with its 'explore more options' ethos, has encouraged them to read more widely. In the words of one: "I ended up spending a lot of time looking through references at the end of articles to see if anything caught my eye purely for interest's sake." In a sixth form exam world

dominated by UMS scores and pre-determined levels of response, it is wonderful to be seeing once again examples of unfettered intellectual curiosity.

Importantly, Perse staff have enjoyed teaching Pre-U. For years we have taught for the A level exam and also taught the subject, and sometimes it has felt as if the two are separate processes. Exciting discussions about the evidence for global warming would have to be tempered by the harsh reality of levels of response and the tedious terminal mantra 'in conclusion, to evaluate...' with which students wearily and predictably embark upon their final paragraph.

The Pre-U is resplendent with opportunities for teachers and students to leave the well-defined motorways of exam learning and meander through some very scenic and stimulating intellectual byways, which lead to a more interesting, diverse, and rounded educational journey that is a better preparation for university and life thereafter.

The proof of the pudding, however, is in the eating, and we were all a little anxious when the first Pre-U results were published this summer. We shouldn't have been – the students did well and, in most cases, better than expected. Just as important, examination justice was done and the Pre-U results accurately reflected the pupils' efforts and ability. The quality of Pre-U examining and examiners appears to be very high, and we have had none of the results lottery and consequent appeal processes that can blight A level and GCSE.

At The Perse, the mixed curriculum economy is working well and Pre-U is well established. Pre-U is not a universal panacea and it won't be right for all students in all subjects. However, in subjects where we are offering Pre-U, numbers are growing and sixth formers and their parents appear to be voting with their feet.

*Ed Elliott is Headmaster of The Perse School, Cambridge.*

# University challenge

Chris Ramsey finds good sense in unlikely places



*Chris Ramsey*

Amongst the hot potatoes tossed between members of the coalition in their early discussions, Higher Education might just have been the one that burned most fingers – for which, to be honest, much thanks. It is time that Higher Education was debated more meaningfully: some 400,000 teenagers a year are now going to university, a cause surely for celebration, but more than 140,000 others want to, have the grades and the cash to, but the places are not there.

The Liberal Democrats, famously, were opposed to any rise in tuition fees as we went into May's election; the Conservatives were agnostic. Now a Conservative heads the Department for Education, a Liberal Democrat the Enterprise and Skills team (which hosts Higher Education), and it was Vince Cable who drew the short straw and broke the silence about tuition fees and the future of universities' funding.

His message was a familiar one: the country can't afford current levels of HE spending and people are going to have to pay more – probably, be it said, for less *ie* bigger tuition classes and less personal attention. Hardly a message of hope, of course, to this year's crop of would-be undergraduates, competing as they are with deferred candidates from last year and in a market place where, infamously, even triple-A candidates are not getting university offers.

Many *C&CR* readers, of course, will have undergone their Higher Education in a lost Arcadian regime: predicated on 10% of the population going to university, it was affordable to have this as a freebie. My sister's Oxford education, four years' chemistry in the footsteps of Margaret Thatcher, came free, an irony not lost on her, only her accommodation paid for by our parents. My Cambridge career, our father having died, was not only free, but most of my living costs were paid for by a 'full grant'. It sounds to today's teenagers like a lost paradise, as in fact it is.

No western economy, let alone one as indebted as the UK, can afford to fund the education and accommodation of close-on half

# Professional

its youngsters, for, as is often forgotten, university is essentially boarding education, for which parents are paying an eye-watering £30K + per annum at the independent secondary level.

Those of us who work in secondary education may not have noticed the battering that Higher Education has had over the last decade. If we think times have been tough, it's worth sparing universities a thought: ill-judged targets (just where did 50% come from?); no long-term thought about funding; fines for exceeding targets.

Having visited and spoken to a number of Vice-Chancellors, I know they are doing their very best and are passionate about their sector, a sector that has also been unceremoniously moved from the Education (or, until recently, Children, Schools and Families) Department to, er, Business. The latter is a significant shift: to see HE as part of Business and Enterprise is to see it as functional, part of the country's economy. In part it is, but in part it very much is not. Degrees in engineering or medicine might fit well with this vision, but where exactly does it leave those who study classics or history? Would their employment prospects be rosier if they plumped for golf-course management?

And it all had to come to a head. Up to now, the vast expansion of Higher Education has been funded, unconvincingly, by loans, capped fees and a whopping deficit. The alternatives ahead are hardly palatable, but Lord Browne has the task of beating a machete through them. A scientist, he must have reduced the alternatives to three.

First, Mr Cable's solution: tax it. Despite growing numbers of students, Higher Education is after all still only for the minority and it is, perhaps, therefore fair to ask those who benefit to pay. How do they benefit? By earning more, of course. How are they enabled to pay? By being taxed more.

It is brave of Mr Cable to suggest taxing education, even if he segues out of the charge neatly:

Most students meet costs by taking a student loan, payable direct from income after graduation when earning a reasonable salary. In this sense, we already have a form of graduate tax.

The usual objection of course is that education should not be taxed at all. Mr Cable has simply accepted that it is or must be, but:

The problem is that it is a fixed sum – a poll tax – regardless of the income of the graduate. It surely can't be right that a teacher or care worker or research scientist is expected to pay the same graduate contribution as a top commercial lawyer or surgeon or City analyst whose graduate premium is so much bigger.

A lesson in critical thinking would appear to be in order: is there really a direct causal link between quality of university education and income? Were all those bankers Oxbridge classicists? Does no Cambridge economist teach or lecture? Still, the solution of tax is a logical one.

A second, collectivist solution would be for government to find the funds – somehow. Nobody has to pay for secondary education and we accept that. How much more would it cost to accept the same for Higher Education? More, of course, but not proportionally that much more, goes the argument.

Alan Bennett puts it strongly: 'Education is a birthright and to suggest that students should borrow money to pay for it is quite simply wrong.' The problem here is that we fund secondary education because without it young people would be ill-

equipped for life. The same can't really be said of Higher Education. In that sense, it is a luxury.

The third solution would be to privatise Higher Education entirely. Lift the cap, raise the fees, allow universities to recoup what it costs them to educate students through fees, and provide a compulsory system of bursaries to ensure that those who cannot afford it still have the chance to participate. This third solution might please HEIs most. It is indeed closest to what Dr Wendy Piatt of the Russell Group has proposed, though their submissions to Lord Browne show the fudge and lack of clarity of a committee job.

In an ideal world, then, free universities for all: in a pragmatic one, an HE market. Government policy towards Higher Education over the last decade has felt at times like the background theme to that old GCSE English Literature faithful, Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*: the lonely workers are promised a dream of property and freedom – everyone can have it – but they know deep down that in the end they won't be able to afford it.

Like it or not, Higher Education hovers on the brink of the same divide as secondary education – a small independent sector, aspired to by many, affordable for only a few; and a slightly larger maintained sector of excellence, struggling with bureaucracy and interference, under-funded and over-regulated. One can even see how HE 'Academies' could work in such a system, but it would divide universities seismically.

Yet there is another ingenious solution. Why not free funding from government control, set up an independent fund to which graduates would contribute for a fixed term and on a fixed scale? A tax in some ways, but time-limited and, attractively, not going to the Treasury but to a dedicated trust. It's a scheme that has been financially modelled by the Centre for Economics and Business Research, and it works pretty well.

It would cost graduates who do not go on to be high earners much less than the proposed tax – and a great deal less than tuition fees – and high earners no more. It saves money by cutting out the middlemen – the tax collectors and the government. And it is the clever brainchild of the National Union of Students, no less.

For the NUS to have commissioned the plan is in itself commendable – as they say, 'unmanageable levels of debt ... are bad for both the borrower and the lender' – but for the plan to be as sensible as it is makes it worthy of consideration. Perhaps their ingenuity should not surprise us. In my school our departing upper sixth handed me a perceptive and well-written critique of how the school had developed and what their thoughts for the future were.

To my shame, I had not thought them so wise. And so it is with students: actually, they do know what the problem is. They are not fools who believe nothing needs paying for, nor knaves who want to rob the rich. They are anti-debt which, it turns out, we are all supposed to be now, pro-independence and in favour of diversity, excellence and choice. Most of all, they believe that HE should not be a political football. Given what a bad name football has in the UK, it's hard to argue with that.

*Chris Ramsey is Headmaster of the King's School, Chester, and sits on the HMC/GSA Universities Committee.*

# Ten top tips

## Geoff Lucas anticipates the White Paper, Autumn 2010

*Unwilling to wait for Michael Gove's White Paper, Geoff Lucas seized his keyboard and drafted a personal 'top ten' proposals for the educational scene he will observe as a benign and informed outsider after his retirement in August, 2011.*

*Typically, his aim has been to stimulate debate and these are personal thoughts, not HMC policy. He is, however, happy for the Secretary of State to adopt them without charge. As with any new proposals, there is always the danger of unintended consequences and he would urge proper debate and consultation before any new ideas were adopted or implemented, a policy that has not been characteristic of the approach of any recent Government to Education.*

### **Designate a single awarding body for each subject at both 16 and 18**

This would reduce costly and unnecessary duplication, increase coherence from GCSE to A level, concentrate time and effort on the development of world-class specifications/syllabuses and deliver a single national exam in every subject.

Universities and employers should have a greater role in setting and monitoring standards. Each awarding body would have a duty to innovate (by piloting new approaches, leading to updating of exams every ten years) and there would need to be safeguards in place to minimise the dangers of a monopoly situation (eg a system of licensing, renewable every five years). This is not as radical as a single awarding body (as already exists in Scotland or with the IB) but it would be a move in that direction.

### **Introduce a new, simpler grading system, with fixed proportions gaining each grade (ie norm-referencing)**

The current system is no longer fit for purpose. It leads to spurious attempts to maintain 'standards over time' with regular allegations of grade fixing and grade inflation, and an erosion of any real attempt to differentiate between students. A fixed 5% gaining grade 1, the next 10% grade 2 (and so on) would be far more comprehensible and equitable (providing proposal 1 above was implemented).

However, people would need reminding that different subjects attract different entries (eg Greek versus media studies). For the most competitive courses at the most competitive universities, to know that a candidate with an A\* in a particular subject was in the top 5% of all candidates taking that subject in that particular year would certainly be helpful. The general public, and employers, would also find this easy to grasp.

### **Replace Ofqual by an Exams Ombudsman**

Proposals 1 and 2 would render Ofqual largely redundant. They would also enable time and effort to be concentrated on the setting of high quality exams and their marking, the source of most continuing angst and error in the current system. Better papers and better marking would result in fewer appeals, so the task of the Exams Ombudsman should be manageable.

But such an Ombudsman should be able to intervene before

(or during), not just after an exam, with a team of independent subject specialists on stand-by. Crucially, schools should also be allowed to appeal to the Ombudsman against the marking and grades awarded, not just on procedural grounds as currently happens with the Exams Appeals Board.



Geoff Lucas

### **Reduce the number of examinations from 16-18**

Three different exams (GCSE, AS and A2), each modular in structure with re-sits available, is bad for all in full-time education. The restoration of linear exams, the removal of re-sits and a reduction to two exams would redress the imbalance at a stroke. (Separate arrangements could be made for adults and part-time learners, akin to current HE access courses.)

While A2 exams clearly need to remain, the issue is whether to keep GCSE or AS. Many employers and universities rely heavily on GCSE whilst Cambridge University believes the AS is the best predictor of degree outcomes. There needs to be a national debate and consultation on this, ideally in the context of a revisiting of Post Qualifications Applications (PQA). See 6 below.

### **Separate the AS from the A2**

As an interim measure, the AS could be separated from the A2, forming two discrete qualifications like Scottish Highers and Advanced Highers. The separated AS might, like the current A2, have a synoptic component and an A\* (or 'Grade 1').

This would have several advantages, including increased flexibility for some schools to bypass GCSE in some subjects by taking AS early or, in other cases, bypass AS and simply certificate at A2. Both options would help to reduce the current excessive exam burden.

### **Introduce Post Qualifications Applications (PQA) to higher education**

This has long been called for by Head Teachers' associations (notably ASCL, HMC and GSA) but has proved impossible due to a lack of real political will and logistical difficulties. If proposals 1-5 above were implemented, the whole process of marking and grading could be simplified and speeded up. Coupled with advances in technology, which now allow almost every part of the examining and much of the HE admissions process to be conducted online or remotely, PQA with results out at the start of August becomes feasible.

### **Replace the National Qualifications Framework and Performance Tables with data about Progression Routes and Rates**

The NQF was a bureaucrat's dream but a public nightmare. Attempts to equate very different subjects and qualifications with each other in terms of breadth and depth have helped no-

## Professional

one. Qualifications need to be judged on their fitness for progression to whatever comes next: further education, employment, higher education or a mixture of all three.

Here, as with the setting and marking of exams, employers and universities should have a more prominent role. The publication of key information about knowledge of what progression routes particular qualifications open up and, within them, specialist subjects or areas of learning, coupled with data on schools' and colleges' success rates in guiding pupils and helping them secure their next steps, would be far more useful than the current NQF and performance tables. It would, above all, focus minds on learners rather than institutions, on people rather than points, on the fitness for purpose of qualifications rather than bogus claims of parity and equivalence.

### Introduce some form of English Baccalaureate

While not proposing the resurrection of a Tomlinson-style overarching diploma, there is certainly a good case for introducing some form of 'group award' akin to the old School Certificate, which predated O levels, if only to bolster the uptake of modern languages to GCSE level. Michael Gove's trailing of a possible 'English Bacc' as an additional motivator for students with grades A\*-C in English, maths, a science, a modern language and a humanities subject deserves serious consideration.

There also remains an urgent need to address the issue of qualifications other than GCSE, AS and A2, both alternative academic ones, notably IGCSE, the Pre-U and IB, and applied/vocational qualifications. An English Bacc could embrace components from all of these.

While the last government's ill-fated diplomas were doomed to fail because of an unprecedented level of complexity and bureaucracy in both design and delivery, something should be salvaged from the experience. The principal learning

components of some diplomas, which have proved to be innovative and motivating, should be reviewed to assess whether some of them could be re-launched as smaller, discrete qualifications.

The aborted 'academic' diplomas are especially worth re-visiting. Modern languages, in particular, had the potential to offer the motivating and challenging alternative to GCSEs and A levels that this country badly needs. An English Bacc that recognised applied modern language and science qualifications would be a real breakthrough in bridging the academic/vocational divide.

### Think globally and compare internationally

Qualifications are now, more than ever, an international commodity and resource. We don't just export and import students, we do the same with qualifications. Potential progression routes are now also global, in both employment and Higher Education.

It is critical that we are alert to and learn from experience in other countries (including Scotland, Wales and Ireland) and benchmark what we offer and what young people achieve internationally. Until recently, this has been a much neglected part of our public examinations and qualifications debate.

### Keep it simple

This is probably the biggest challenge of all, especially in a sphere of educational activity that is highly technical and politicised, with a high media profile and huge public interest. If the Coalition Government applies the test of 'common sense' to all of its proposals, there is a fair chance that what will emerge will be workable and, above all, intelligible to the wider general public.

*Geoff Lucas, the Secretary of HMC, is writing in a personal capacity.*

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Fencer is Scottish Champion

Plymouth College Modern Pentathlon scholar Georgina Barrington, 17, has won the U17 and U20 Scottish Fencing Championships.

Held in Dunfermline, the one-day event saw Georgina progress through the rounds of both age group competitions in a series of first-to-15-points fights. The Scottish-born athlete competed against the best fencers in Scotland to take the two titles.

Georgina moved to Devon when she was young and until recently has competed for England. However, fencing in Scotland is developing fast and Georgina is keen to be part of the up-and-coming team. No stranger to representing her country, Georgina was selected to the senior Great Britain team for the World Cup tournament in Spain, followed by the U17 Great Britain team in the European Championships in Athens earlier this year. She is currently eighth in the senior UK rankings.



# Chill winds in Swedish education

Just how good are Swedish schools, asks Angela Drew

Michael Gove's enthusiasm for the Swedish free school model seems to be based on the assumption that we should all admire the educational achievements of our friends in the north. And who could fail to be impressed by the excellence of Swedish education? Well, Swedes, actually.

A report in 2008 for *The Policy Exchange* notes that 'the Swedish school system is perceived by the Swedish public (and certainly the media) to be in crisis'. The Headteachers I shadowed in the Stockholm suburb of Järfälla would have disputed this judgement, but neither of the two international studies which compare the achievement of pupils across national boundaries, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and the worldwide research project into



*Samgymnasiet staff at a School Choice Fair.*

Trends in Mathematics and Science (TIMSS), makes good reading for the Swedes.

The last international TIMSS study, published in 2008, suggested that the achievement of Swedish pupils in mathematics was in decline. In both maths and science, the results of English pupils are judged by TIMSS to be 'significantly superior' to those of Swedish pupils.

But what really sparked Sweden's educational inferiority complex was the PISA survey of 2006, which showed Sweden's next-door neighbour, Finland, at the top of the OECD tables for science and maths and second for reading.

By comparison, Sweden's results were gallingly unimpressive and since then Swedish educationalists have been heading to Finland in their droves, although they are sceptical about being able to apply the regimented Finnish formula to their own schools. "Too much sitting up straight in rows for us," says one Headteacher, shaking her head sadly.

Since the 1960s, Swedish education has been based on a philosophy of inclusion and has not been overly concerned with excellence – football fans might think of Sven Goran Erikson's approach to substitutions in 'friendly' internationals. Swedish

Headteachers mutter about *Jantelagen*, the fear of elitism which makes Scandinavian society so attractive but can make secondary education hard going for academic tall poppies.

Swedish schools score highly at keeping pupils in the classroom Post-16, not least because it's practically impossible to get a job in Sweden, even as a waitress, without an Upper Secondary qualification. That said, the Upper Secondary Schools, which cater for 16 to 18 year olds, have a drop-out rate of over 25%.

In an upper secondary school in Järfälla, I meet a group of 17 year-olds following the school's 'Football programme' – one of the 15 overarching academic programmes offered by the 800 pupil Samgymnasiet (Social Science College). The Headteacher cheerfully admits that few of the pupils involved will become professional footballers, although one ex-pupil played for Blackburn Rovers for a short time while another plays football in La Liga in Spain.

The breadth of the Swedish curriculum is admirable but the depth is questionable. Teachers multi-task rather than specialise: one teacher in the Samgymnasiet teaches secondary English, Spanish, Latin and history without complaint. Headteachers work on the local authority's break-even minimum of 28 pupils per class in the upper secondary school and sixth form classes are huge by British standards.

Jennifer, a bright, motivated 16 year-old, admits that it can be frustrating when fellow pupils repeatedly ask questions about simple material: "I guess it can slow the class down," she observes, with a peculiarly Swedish lack of resentment.

Of course there is much to admire in the Swedish model. Järfälla's municipal Samgymnasiet and its partner school the NT Gymnasiet (Natural Science College) share a beautiful building. Light airy spaces abound, the vast two storey library is breathtaking, science labs with their tasteful pale ash benches look like designer kitchens, chic staff rooms are furnished like room sets from an IKEA catalogue and the glass walls that divide classrooms from broad, open corridors seem to symbolise the open, democratic style of Swedish education.

The physical and philosophical attractiveness of Swedish state education for the British visitor is partly due to its otherness. Headteachers come from a wider range of backgrounds than is usual in Britain. Gunilla, who runs the excellent NT Gymnasiet, which offers three-year science courses in subjects from robotics to architecture, is an engineer; and female Heads of secondary schools outnumber male Heads; and, yes, the female Heads do attribute the success of their careers to the excellence of Swedish childcare.

The flat management structure is a revelation. There are no heads of department or middle managers. Any tasks that need to be done in a subject area are listed on a grid and teachers pick one or two that they fancy for the year. "Mostly it works well, sometimes it doesn't."

The Headteacher of the Samgymnasiet, Bertil Marcusson, stands in his Doc Martens – "usually I wear sneakers because of my bad back, these are in honour of you" – washing cups at the

## Professional

staffroom sink. Bertil passes cheerfully through the corridors provoking little reaction from most pupils other than the occasional friendly “Hej!” There are no assemblies, no school spirit. “In my last school,” my informant Jennifer explains, “the new Head didn’t bother to introduce himself. For a long time, none of the pupils knew who he was.”

Social and academic support is at the heart of the school’s organisational structure with the school nurse and social worker meeting with the Head weekly. Every pupil is entitled to free transport and free, healthy school meals, albeit at an ungodly hour – lunch is served from 10.30am and by 1.00pm they are wiping down the tables.

Bertil explains that ‘the child at the centre’ defines the Swedish approach. In an appropriately Nordic sporting image, Bertil says that there is unease in Swedish society about the degree to which teachers and parents are ‘curling’ pupils – rushing forward with frenetic sweeping movements to smooth the path for youngsters rather than letting them overcome obstacles themselves.

So, will the introduction of the Swedish independent school model bring about the improvement of British education that our politicians promise? Perhaps. The Swedish Independent Schools Association makes very limited claims for independent schools’ success noting that: ‘Where comparisons have been possible, independent schools have performed better in terms of knowledge and skills than local council schools.’ Comparisons are not possible in Sweden – there is no requirement for baseline testing so there is no opportunity for any kind of value added comparison of pupil achievement.

Unlike state schools, independent schools are allowed to use ability tests to select pupils if the school is oversubscribed. Not surprisingly, research has shown that, on average, the parents of pupils in independent school have higher qualifications than the parents of pupils at state schools. The Independent Schools Association notes, but does not attempt to refute, the criticism that ‘it is highly motivated parents who opt to take their children out of local council schools, thus leaving those schools with disadvantaged children’.

Kunskapsskolan, a chain of non-governmental schools, with their reliance on self-motivation and personalised learning, flourish in middle class districts. Where pupils fail to make the grade in an independent sector that is much more diverse than

*Swedish staff room, courtesy of IKEA.*



*Music students at Samgymnasiet.*

the British model, state schools are legally obliged to pick up the pieces.

Competition might improve the state sector – but now that Swedish independent schools are educating more than 17% of Swedish pupils in the upper secondary sector, the strains are showing in the state system. At the Schools Choice Day, where pupils make their choice of secondary education in a Freshers’ Fair atmosphere, I meet the depressed looking Headteacher of a suburban technical school.

Her school role has fallen to 275 – courses must be cut and teacher lay-offs are looming. The school cannot compete with a perfect storm of a sharp demographic decline in school-age pupils and the new breed of independent schools run by the big chains, most notably Kunskapsskolan, and by industrial sponsors such as construction companies, offering, among other inducements, free laptops and the promise of paid employment.

Swedish society strives to be fair but the effect of the rapid introduction of the independent school system since the early 1990s has been to make it less equitable. The pupils left behind in the state technical colleges are those whose parents are least able to access the independent schools. Sweden’s generous immigration policies mean that more than 14% of Swedish school children have a non-Swedish background.

Traumatized refugees from the world’s conflict zones, notably Somalia and Iraq, are under-represented in the independent sector and over-represented in the state technical colleges. In a rundown classroom with blank walls I spend an uncomfortable 30 minutes watching a lesson where the pupils learn nothing – some turn up ten minutes late and without apology; most have not brought their books; several have brought mobile phones, which they use to communicate with each other throughout the lesson; others drink ostentatiously from cans of Coke.

It is not a scene that would please Sweden's education minister Jan Björklund, an ex-military man on a mission to bring Swedish education 'under control'. Since his appointment in 2007, the Swedish Education Ministry has a new motto: 'To set standards at school is to care.' The chief executive for education in Järfälla, Jan Erik Sahlberg, obediently repeats the government slogan, which echoes the 'Basic to Basics' mood in Sweden, 'the aim is knowledge'.

This is very much the theme of The Education Act for Knowledge, Choice and Security passed in March 2010: there will be no more newspaper scare stories about secondary school pupils enjoying lessons in massage and Headteachers will be given the power to suspend pupils.

Karin Nilsson from Skolverket, the Swedish Schools' Ministry, explains that in future there will be a greater emphasis on national testing, more autonomy for schools, more accountability for outcomes, and a greater emphasis on inspection – oh, and a compulsory national qualification for Headship. Where can they be getting their ideas from?

*Angela Drew is Deputy Head (Academic)  
at Epsom College.*



*Catering department at  
a technical college.*

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### A Caterham at Caterham

Most schools offer a wide selection of co-curricular activities, but not many students can leave school saying that, in their spare time, they built a car! That is precisely what mechanically minded students at Caterham School are now able to say – and not any old car, but one of the most iconic and proudly British sports cars of all time – the Caterham Seven.

Each year pupils take delivery of one of these kits and spend a school year gradually putting the vehicle together with the help and supervision of staff. The initiative gives participating students a unique insight into practical subjects such as mechanical engineering and physics, as well as imbuing a sense of discipline and teamwork, not to mention the satisfaction of seeing a fully-working car as the result of their labours.

Just round the corner from Caterham Cars' Surrey base, 16 students have become hard-working members of the Kit Car Club, which meets twice a week. Although they receive guidance and encouragement from teachers, students are largely left to run the build to their own timescale, giving the group a sense of their own responsibility.

Assistant head David Clark comments: "We find that the students who take part in the Kit Car Club are not necessarily captain of the rugby team or players in a band. This gives them an opportunity to be creative and the sense of achievement at the end, when they see the final product, is enormous. It's a very cool thing to be involved in – all the dads are very jealous."

The school's Parents' Association funded the purchase of the first kit, but after the initial outlay there was no further cost to the school because each year the Club sells the fully-



built car back to Caterham and buys a new kit for the same price. Andy Noble, sales and marketing director at Caterham Cars, is aiming to expand the Sevens for Schools initiative, which now runs at 15 institutions around the UK, with a similar scheme for underprivileged children in Manchester's Tameside area.

Anyone interested in knowing more should contact: [andyn@caterham.co.uk](mailto:andyn@caterham.co.uk).



Simon  
Letman

# What makes good Continuing Professional Development?

Simon Letman proposes some key principles for future planning

In the current economic climate, what makes good CPD is a vexing question for training coordinators up and down the country. From the evidence we have, in schools where CPD is regarded as 'effective' by teachers and school leaders, eight key conditions tend to be present. In terms of the culture and organisation of the school, there is usually a strong commitment to support CPD on the part of senior leaders. There is also effective leadership of CPD activities by a training and development coordinator and effective planning for a wide variety of CPD activities through ongoing dialogue between that coordinator and teachers.

In these schools, adequate resources for CPD are provided and there is successful alignment of individual and school needs in the focus of chosen activities. Finally, and crucially, there are opportunities for teachers to apply what has been learned in the context of their classrooms and all of this tends to be underpinned by ongoing support through coaching and/or mentoring delivered through an effective staff review system.

This seems to be a fairly simple recipe but, as we all appreciate, there are a number of serious obstacles for many schools at the moment, not least of which is finding the time and the resources to do things properly.

## What CPD?

To a greater or lesser extent, two important considerations tend to guide and inform the choice of training activities in our schools. When looking to utilise resources from within the school, a key consideration is the potential impact of activities on pupil learning (eg peer observation, coaching, mentoring, shadowing).

When considering whether to make use of commercial providers from outside the school, judgements about the cost-effectiveness of activities within the context of the training budget as a whole have to be factored into the equation too.

## Getting value for money

When using external providers, what is hugely problematical is what sort of criteria do you apply to judge whether money has actually been well-spent? It is a lot easier to evaluate the *impact* of CPD than to judge its *value for money*. Dialogue about intended outcomes and agreement about evaluation measures can be *suggestive* of cost-effectiveness, but no more than that. One formula actually suggests that the cost-effectiveness of any CPD can be broadly assessed by dividing the effectiveness rating produced by the staff by the cost of the training. Blunt instruments such as this do exist, but are not recommended.

Over the last year or so, this economic consideration has become even more of an imperative for all schools, particularly smaller ones. This is mainly because the cost of external training

has continued to increase and, in looking to make overall savings, the school's training budget can sometimes be seen as a soft target. When costing external training provided by commercial operators, associated costs such as VAT, travel, accommodation and supply cover can often generate a net cost of well over £500 for a day event. Residential events will be considerably more.

## Providing adequate resources

At one time, HMC recommended that schools should aim to set aside a sum for training that was roughly equivalent to 2% of the full-time staff wages bill. This is no longer a recommendation as it is accepted that many schools will struggle to achieve this even in the good times.

The reality for most schools is that it is becoming increasingly difficult to manage the expectations of staff in a climate where growing demand for professional development and career progression opportunities provided by the employer collides with the need to ensure that teachers have the necessary basic knowledge and skills to deliver the changing curriculum and exam board specifications.

As a result, training coordinators must not only be selective about what they choose to invest in but also, if possible, demonstrate that the investment has had a palpable impact on a whole range of desired outcomes for pupils, teachers and the school.

## Making the right choices and supporting CPD

Nearly a decade ago Ofsted undertook research to look at how effectively so-called 'Standards Funding' for CPD in maintained schools was being managed and the effect of professional development activities on raising standards in over 100 schools spread across ten local education authorities.

Ofsted concluded that in about 70% of schools there were effective systems in place to identify teachers' professional needs and relate them well to whole school development plans. 80% of schools drew on a wide range of activities to meet teachers' needs, and in most schools teachers were constructively involved in professional development activities aimed at developing their knowledge and competencies and improving their career opportunities.

At the time, course attendance was the main vehicle for professional development in most of the schools studied, although there was growing awareness of the value of other forms of CPD. These included sharing the expertise of teachers in the same school, sharing knowledge and skills with teachers in other schools, and using consultants to provide in-school programmes of support to tackle a specific need.

However, the project discovered that CPD coordinators rarely assembled an array of CPD activities to form a coherent individual training plan, designed to bring about specific improvements in a teacher's knowledge and skills, and that teachers tended to work on loosely unrelated activities that did not always provide good value for money or achieve the intended outcome.

Moreover, schools on the whole failed to provide enough time to support effective professional development and the procedures used to judge the extent to which teachers' professional needs had been met were weak, tending to focus mainly on inspection findings, the analysis of pupils' performance data and self-evaluation. In this respect, teachers' judgements were usually based on broad statements about what they felt better able to do or the increased confidence with which they now undertook their work.

### Teachers' attitudes to CPD

At about the same time (2001), Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) undertook a study on behalf of the DfES to look at teachers' attitudes to CPD, including their future expectations, and to look at ways of monitoring the impact of CPD on teachers' experiences, attitudes and expectations in future years – *Teachers' Perceptions of Continuing Professional Development*.

The study coincided with the launch of the new government CPD strategy 'Learning and Teaching' and part of MMU's role was to advise on strategy and investment priorities over the next few years.

The study's findings were based on questionnaire returns from over 2500 teachers in maintained schools. Researchers found that although most teachers were 'satisfied' with their CPD, they expressed negative feelings about 'one size fits all' approaches, preferring instead more individualised activities that took account of teachers' existing knowledge, experience and needs. Most activities were focused on teaching skills and subject knowledge, but few teachers took part in CPD activities such as research, award bearing courses or international visits, which were highly valued.

In addition, most teachers worked with traditional notions of CPD, such as courses, conferences and INSET days. Teachers also identified a range of obstacles to professional learning, which included distance to training opportunities, workload generally and the drive to meet overall school development targets taking precedence over individual needs. Nevertheless, most teachers accepted as reasonable that there should be a balance between school CPD needs and individual needs.

### The importance of school culture

A number of very interesting general findings relating to school cultures emerged from this study. It was apparent that some schools had developed quite sophisticated and effective professional learning communities when others just as clearly had not. Although external influences contributed to this, such as LEA funding or size of the authority, orientations to CPD were more significantly shaped by the department one happened to be a member of, by factors such as the particular mix of career stages within a school sub-group, for example.

Crucially, in schools where strong CPD cultures existed, the CPD coordinator role had been developed over recent years. Schools where CPD coordinators had time and resources to

support individuals were those where more positive feelings about CPD were in evidence. In fact, a major recommendation of the report was that schools must be helped to improve their needs identification processes for staff and that resources should be ring-fenced for personal/individual CPD and for those activities where school needs and individual needs can be clearly interrelated.

### What does high quality CPD really look like?

The MMU report was followed very quickly by a DfEE initiative that aimed to develop a voluntary Code of Practice for providers of Professional Development for teachers – *Good Value CPD. A Code of Practice for Providers of Professional Development for Teachers*.

As demand for externally provided training grew, so did the number of providers ready to satisfy that demand. There was growing concern, however, about the increasing number of reports from schools of 'cowboy consultants', hence the attempt to regulate the trade for the first time.

As a result, a benchmark for 'high quality professional development' was enshrined in the new voluntary code. For example, according to the DfEE, 'good CPD' should meet identified individual, school or national development priorities and be based on good practice in teaching and learning.

It should also help raise standards of pupils' achievements, be provided by those with the necessary experience, expertise and skills, be planned systematically, be based on current research and inspection evidence and provide value for money. Finally, effective monitoring and evaluation systems should be in place, seeking out and acting on user feedback to inform the quality of future provision.

### Getting it right

Five years later in 2006, Ofsted conducted a further survey into the impact in schools of the government's strategy – *The Logical Chain: continuing professional development in effective schools*, drawing data from maintained schools where previous inspection reports identified strong practice in the area of CPD. The 2001 initiative had been relaunched in 2005 with a number of additional features. The main driver behind the new survey was again to measure how effectively schools were using the CPD funding delegated to them.

Remarkably little had changed over the intervening years. Effective schools had recognised the potential of CPD in terms of raising standards and had given it a central role in planning for improvement. They had also used a wide range of CPD activities to meet teachers' individual needs as well as the needs of the school more generally and they had integrated planning for CPD with school development planning. A key characteristic of these effective schools was an understanding on the part of senior managers of the potential of CPD for raising standards and an unequivocal commitment to provide sufficient resources.

However, some weaknesses remained. For example, senior leaders tended to be much better at identifying the needs of the school than identifying the needs of individuals and few schools evaluated the impact of CPD successfully, largely because they failed to identify, at the planning stage, its intended outcomes and suitable evaluation methods. Other weaknesses were the lack of an effective method for assessing the value for money of their CPD and an over-reliance on teachers' own perceptions of their needs.

# Professional

## Moving forward

The range of surveys we have, together with our own experiences, offers the possibility to identify what we might call the 'Ten Commandments of CPD'. These key principles could be used to inform our approach to developing more effective CPD strategies in the future:

- Professional learning and development is an entitlement and responsibility for all teachers.
- Good CPD requires the commitment of senior leaders and good CPD plans cover all levels of staff, being fully integrated into a coherent cycle of whole school strategic development planning.
- CPD is most effective where the staff development coordinator has a clearly defined strategic role.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of CPD is crucial and should be underpinned by clear identification of the desired outcomes in terms of pupils' learning and achievement.
- Even schools with limited budgets should earmark adequate funds for CPD.
- Staff review systems can help to generate carefully

considered individual training plans and help to align the needs of the school and the needs of the individual.

- Effective CPD blends out-of-school training with bespoke work in school using internal or external expertise. Teachers must be given opportunities to apply and evaluate what has been learned with evaluation guiding the choice of subsequent activities.
- Good CPD is based on the best available evidence about teaching and learning drawn from a range of sources, including personal (action) research.
- Coaching and mentoring is a potentially valuable form of CPD. These approaches help to encourage self-reflection and reflection on the practice of others. Lesson observation can play a crucial part in this process.
- Well planned CPD has a positive effect on the recruitment and retention of staff and on morale and general enthusiasm for teaching.

*Dr Simon Letman is HMC  
Director of Professional Development.*



*James  
Rich*

# Serious fun at Bolton

*James Rich describes a wide range of outreach programmes*

Whilst we might have hoped that a new government would provide some respite on the issue of the charitable status of independent schools, the Attorney General, Dominic Grieve, announced at the end of September that an

independent tribunal should be the next means by which the status of the Independent Schools Council's 1260 schools is investigated.

This came hot on the heels of the Charity Commission's report of July 2010 which followed an investigation that had asked independent schools to 'demonstrate how they bring real benefit to the public' using five fee-paying schools as guinea pigs to test their criteria. Focusing almost exclusively on the narrow issue of the number of bursaries offered, these schools emerged from the process with varying degrees of censure.

Clearly the new government is unconvinced that the matter has been resolved and, though ISC chief David Lyscom declares himself "delighted" that this issue is to be investigated in full, it would be unnatural for most who work in independent schools not to feel a hint of trepidation.

Aside from the estimated £3 billion per annum that independent schools save any government, surely especially noteworthy in a time of swingeing government cuts and austerity, the refusal to acknowledge the work carried out by independent schools within their local communities ignores a critical aspect of the ethos and mindset of these institutions. Many independent schools were founded on the principle of being central to their surroundings and accept that engagement with their local community is about more than simply offering their facilities for public use.

Bolton School has embraced this notion wholeheartedly. Re-endowed by Lord Leverhulme, one of this nation's greatest modern patrician philanthropists, it actively displayed its public benefit long before the recent Charity Commission focus, with an extensive list of primary school liaison events and the appointment of former international footballer Keith Branagan to encourage competitive sport in the local community.

Over the past decade in particular, the school has developed an impressive portfolio of community initiatives, culminating in the 'Serious Fun on Saturdays' project, founded in partnership with the SHINE Trust ([www.shinetrust.org.uk](http://www.shinetrust.org.uk)) in 2009, which allows children from underprivileged backgrounds and living within a one mile radius of the school to enjoy fun educational sessions every Saturday morning.

The sessions are all staged using the school's facilities and staffed by Bolton School teaching staff and the participating

*Historian in residence.*





*Chris Difford of Squeeze.*

children have benefited from the opportunity to learn Japanese, practise martial arts, learn about rivers by splashing about in them with seasoned geographers and visit the National Space Centre in Leicester.

The 'Serious Fun on Saturdays' project at Bolton School might be a high profile and large-scale example of community engagement (it has been shortlisted for the 'Community Initiative Award' at this year's inaugural Independent Schools Awards ceremony) but it is far from an isolated example. Critically it has helped to inculcate amongst the pupils an understanding that many others are nowhere near as fortunate as they are and their contribution to the project as mentors has been a vital ingredient of its success.

This instinct has become a key facet of wider sixth form life in particular. All sixth formers now complete a programme of community service (many serving in different capacities for over 100 hours in total) in order to attain their 'Bolton School Award' and, in many cases, their nationally recognised Voluntary Service Award.

The scheme, which has developed with the support of Vikki Askew of the ISC Community Action Working Party, begins with a 'Volunteering Fair' at the start of the academic year where pupils can choose their preferred form of service, and concludes with a celebratory event. Heather Tunstall, deputy head of sixth form, believes that: "Volunteering has enabled our pupils to act as a real force for change in the local community."

Many academic departments have also taken the lead where community involvement is concerned. In the music department, Jeremy Bleasdale was appointed head of community music to oversee new ways in which Bolton School could act as a fulcrum for large scale community events, from hosting workshops by

artists such as Chris Difford of the band Squeeze to which local state schools were invited, to staging sell-out concerts marrying the talents of our own pupils and those of local primary schools at Manchester's leading concert venue, the Bridgewater Hall.

Meanwhile Mike Yates, head of chemistry, has increasingly used The Ogden Trust as a means to develop community interaction between Bolton School and the many state schools in



*Serious fun on Saturdays.*

surrounding areas, hosting CPD sessions for local primary science coordinators, staging lectures for gifted and talented children hosted by Old Boltonian and Nobel Prize winner Sir Harry Kroto, and organising residential science camps at Oxford University for local schoolchildren.

These links with The Ogden Trust, along with the Institute of Physics, have now led to the school appointing its first ever Ogden Fellow, physicist Mark Ormerod, who will spend one day

## Professional

teaching Bolton School pupils and four days outreach work in local state schools to further their interest in and expertise at teaching physics as a dedicated science.

The partnerships utilising the enthusiasm and funding offered by organisations like The Ogden Trust and SHINE should highlight to the Charity Commission and the new government the ingenuity and the enviable network available to independent schools, as well as the high esteem in which most independent schools are held by outside agencies.

Bolton School's history department coordinated all these factors when setting up its 'Historian in Residence' scheme, in partnership with the Imperial War Museum North at Salford Quays. Under the terms of this scheme, the museum has seconded one of its highly skilled 'interactors', Helen Breedon, to work at the school for one afternoon a week. During this time, Helen is team-teaching lessons, offering stand-alone sessions to the school's History Society and engaging in projects within the local community, including SHINE, all funded by Bolton School.

This scheme is the perfect illustration of an independent

school engaging with institutions and individuals within its locality for the benefit of its own pupils *and* its wider community and it mirrors similar projects undertaken by Bolton School in conjunction with Bolton Lads and Girls Club.

Cynics might say that we are simply seeking to feather our own nest by using such events to boost interest and/or intake. In fact, the vast majority of these projects concentrate on social pockets that independent schools have never reached and many of these schemes actively support the work of local and rival secondary institutions.

These schemes are genuinely born out of a desire to play a full part in the community and 'share the wealth' in terms of the facilities, talents and commitment enjoyed by independent schools. This will need to be acknowledged and quantified (not a straightforward task) by any independent body seeking to audit the public benefit offered by independent schools.

*James Rich is director of admissions and head of history at Bolton School.*

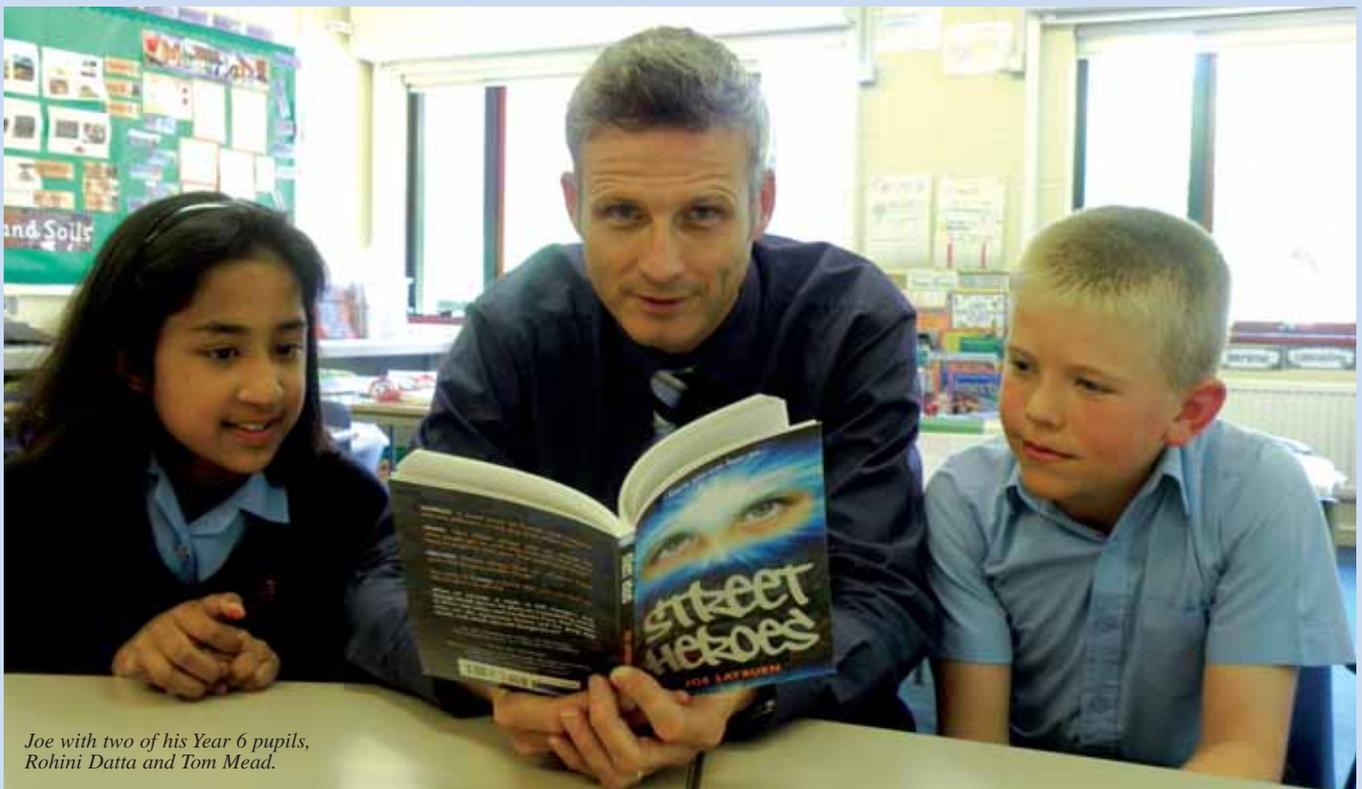
## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Bancroft's deputy head receives award for debut novel

Joe Layburn, deputy head at Bancroft's Prep School in Woodford Green, has been awarded The Hillingdon Primary School Book of Year award for his debut novel *Ghostscape*. The judges, Year 5 and 6 pupils in Hillingdon Primary Schools, were given copies of 15 short-listed titles to read before voting for their personal favourite. This year's list included books by children's writers Ian Beck and Bernard Ashley.

Joe has recently had his second novel, *Street Heroes*, published and is currently working on his third and fourth, which form a trilogy with *Street Heroes*. Fifteen years experience as a journalist gave him the belief that he could write, but it was not until he started teaching that Joe discovered his audience. "I realised I didn't just want to write any books, I wanted to write for children. Teaching means that I'm in touch with my audience every day."



Joe with two of his Year 6 pupils, Rohini Datta and Tom Mead.

# Cowboys don't cry

Peter Dix shares some prep school memories

I was 'sent away' to school in the 1950s in South Africa – a time and a place when any hint of gentleness to children was the first step on the slippery slope to communism or, at the very least, the unthinkable prospects of democratic government and the introduction of television.

At the age of eight I was bundled into my father's Buick to be driven from my home in Durban on the Indian Ocean coast to start my first term as a boarder at Cordwalles, a prep school on the edge of Pietermaritzburg, the capital of Natal. I was small, skinny and frightened. Life was about to change radically for a little chap who loved his home, his parents, his younger brother and his dog.

"Hmm," sneered the senior matron when she first confronted me, "not strong enough to be on the verandah – he'll have to go into a dormitory." This was pastoral care 1950s style. The Natal Midlands are freezing in winter and, whilst there was no heating in the dorms, the verandah boys were protected from the night frosts by just a hessian blind. Consider my further humiliation 12 months later when my younger brother was immediately designated a verandah boy!

Nevertheless, life at Cordwalles was actually quite tolerable once you got the hang of it. Surnames, of course, were used by everyone, beatings were frequent and teachers were strict. There were no exeats other than on two Sundays a term, from after Matins to before Evensong. Entertainment was restricted to Saturday-night film documentaries twice a term and the occasional visit from a person of note. But there were pickled pilchards for supper every Sunday evening.

What hung like a thundercloud over me, however, was the impending move to my public school. Michaelhouse was, and, as far as I can tell, still is, just about the best senior school in the land. 'The Eton of South Africa' they call it, and it had a reputation for being liberal and civilised.

Relatively speaking. Stories about 'what to expect at Michaelhouse' coursed through our prep school days, causing anxieties hitherto unknown. Rising bell at 6.05am; cold shower; roll-call at 6.25; first period at 6.30; breakfast at 7.15. Those in Tatham House (which, thank God for small mercies, would not include me) had a cold plunge instead of showers, and the new boys (or Cacks as they were called) had to break the ice ... literally.

We heard about the fagging for prefects, the beatings by the same, the initiation rituals, and the PE master called Fritz (an ex-Gestapo officer, rumour had it) who was the South African

fencing champion and who beat uncoordinated new boys with the sabre. At least we were used to the absence of heating. I do not recall if anyone at prep school talked us through all this to alleviate our fear. I think not. After all, why create hardship for children in the first place if you're going to spoil it all by spooning out pastoral care? We were meant to cope. The advice I had, from the second I left my mother's womb until the moment I sailed from Durban harbour for Britain and Cambridge many years later, was "Cowboys don't cry". It was the battle-cry of my youth.

And what was the reality at Michaelhouse? Well it was my prep school experience writ large and actually I rather enjoyed my time there. The teaching and the sport were outstanding, but the hardships and the rituals to be endured were there all right. And, of course, that is what it was all about. The whole process

was designed to toughen us up ... and in South Africa in the 1960s, there was some point to it.

School was followed by National Service, and if Michaelhouse had been tough, the rigours of life as a conscript in the Army were hellish, and, like the ancient Spartans forever mindful and wary of the Helot Threat, so we were constantly ready for *Die Swart Gevaar*, The Black Menace, and that which struck far greater fear into our



*A young Peter Dix, and as Headmaster of Port Regis School.*

young hearts, *Die Boere Korporaal*, the Afrikaner Corporal.

Furthermore, white society was the ultimate male preserve – the Australian male stereotype plus a bit. Business men wore safari suits with long socks drawn up over hairy, muscular calves; worth was measured in terms of how many Castle Lagers you could drink without going to the lavatory; and individualism, be it a liking for classical music or wearing your hair an inch longer than average, invited derision and scorn.

Men had to be men, and prep school was where the toughening up really began. Dorms were uncomfortable and furnishings sparse; matrons breathed fire and brandished razor-sharp claws; and any contact with home was frowned upon as a serious threat to the boot-camp regime in operation. In fact, in all things the purpose was to get as far away from the comforts of home, both physical and emotional, as was humanly possible.

With this went, of course, the received wisdom that you got the best out of children in their work and in their conduct by dint of threat, rules and plenty of punishment. As a result, generations of children had the message communicated to them, at the most formative time of their lives, that you worked hard to avoid being kept in during break and behaved well to avoid the

## South Africa

lash of the Headmaster's cane rather than for any other more enlightened purpose.

Meanwhile the young Peter Dix, having had to endure various archaic and barbaric rituals at Michaelhouse, which included flogging, beatings, the Bog Stream, Sunday Free Bounds (which incorporated venomous puff-adders, bush fires, unpredictable Zulus and the Sarsden waterfall), disappeared into the South African army for his National Service.

He survived and, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was soon growing his hair, playing guitar in a rock band and studying classics at Natal University. Whilst he was doing so, he signed up for a two-year stint of part-time teaching Latin and maths, sport and chess at his old prep school, Cordwalles. No qualifications, of course: they simply weren't required in those days. He made most of it up as he went along, and no-one, especially any parent, was much the wiser. No inspections, no pack-drill.

Life was good at university. Cricket, football, cold beer, surfing, Homer, Virgil, Thucydides and Plato. No discomforts, no unpleasantness, only the uneasy awareness that I was profiting from a political system that favoured my kind to a very considerable degree. The teaching at Natal University was outstanding and my love of the classics knew no bounds and, after four years of bliss, I won a two-year scholarship to Cambridge.

I telegraphed IAPS and asked for a teaching post at a boarding prep school in the UK for the summer term of 1973 prior to starting at Cambridge. Nothing happened for weeks, until finally I received a reply from the Headmaster of a small prep school on the west coast of Scotland inviting me to be the cricket master. I eagerly accepted and was soon installed, give or take all my worldly belongings, which British Rail lost for two

weeks on my arrival. No change there then.

My part-time teaching experience at Cordwalles was one thing, but nothing could have prepared me for this. The history master, when I last heard, was running a specialised roofing company in London; the geography teacher was a Canadian professional baseball player who, during a year's time-out, as he put it, had encountered the Headmaster at a drinks party and been offered the post there and then on the strength of the fact that he had travelled.

The classics master was a fitness fanatic who spent as much time doing press-ups in the corridor and chin-ups in the changing-room as he did teaching Latin; the music master, an Australian who came from Wagga Wagga, could not play an instrument, and the concert that term consisted of 105 boys hitting things; and the elegantly eccentric English master would load young boys into his veteran Rolls Royce on Sundays for a day on the beach.

Before her appointment, the assistant matron had been telephoned one evening by the Head on the suggestion of a friend.

"Do you have any first-aid qualifications?"

"No."

"Do you have any experience of working with children?"

"No."

"Ah well ... I'm sure you have plenty of common sense. Can you start on Monday?"

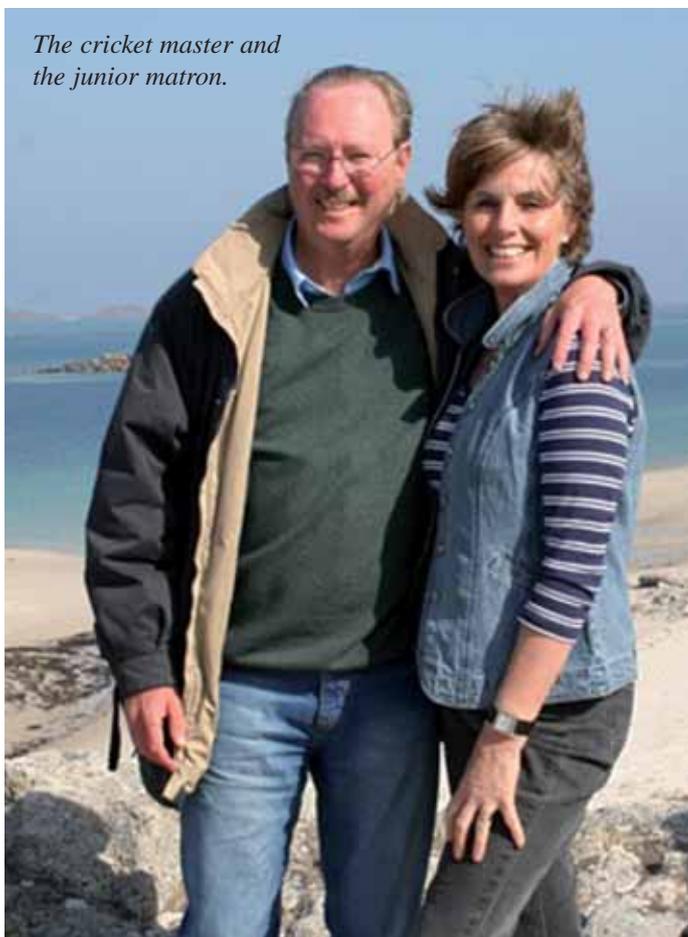
That was one of his better appointments. In fact, reader, I married her! Shower-time would have interested today's social services inspectors: the boys were herded by age group into a pit in the changing room where matron major hosed them down. Imagine the consternation when, one evening, matron minor, aged 17, was invited to do the job.

The Headmaster discovered that the cricket master enjoyed a game of chess and he would invite me over two or three evenings a week and give me nothing but neat whisky to drink. I held my breath, I prayed for cold beer ... to no avail. By half-term I had got the hang of it. I do not remember how the chess went.

Hired as the cricket master (without, of course, any thought of a reference – Safeguarding? What was that – a goalkeeping course?), I was immediately asked to teach English, maths, RS, anything really, which I happily did. There was no induction, no appraisal, no SATs, no Key Stage 2, no departmental meetings, let alone agreement trialling or quartile tables, no thought of criterion-referenced, norm-referenced, ipsative-referenced, summative, formative or evaluative assessment, no academic management team, no director of studies, and virtually no accountability.

I still rather hanker after a time when teaching styles were less prescribed and inspiring children was the essence of a good lesson. It was enormous fun and the children seemed very happy, but it was pretty loose-limbed. The school no longer exists, nor do hundreds like it, which merged or closed as the winds of change blew through the prep school world.

Just three years later, after my time at Cambridge and a brief flirtation with the Stock Exchange, I found myself teaching classics at King's College School, Cambridge, a serious prep school with professional teachers already doing most things right both in the boarding and in the classroom (to say nothing of the choir stalls). It was the mid-1970s and my teaching career proper was under way. We were still some time away from the highly regulated and intensely accountable educational style of



*The cricket master and the junior matron.*

today, but the better schools were sensing that they had to become more professional and more modern. Children needed to be taught properly and looked after well.

We were also some distance from the general acceptance of co-ed as a credible alternative, in the eyes of the independent-school buyer, to traditional single-sex schools, which were still regarded as the only blue-chip choice. King's Cambridge, though, was always appreciably more liberal than other colleges and, with these dons as governors, the school went co-ed whilst I was there and it was like a breath of fresh air.

When I became Headmaster of Port Regis, a co-ed boarding prep school in Dorset, in January 1994, it was immediately clear to me that times had changed for prep schools. Parents still hoped that boarding would make their children more independent, confident and mature, but they no longer wanted or expected the experience to be uncomfortable. Surveys showed that, when asked their reasons for choosing boarding, more and more parents wanted good facilities to accompany a fuller education and greater independence for their children, and the happiness and comfort of their children loomed as an ever-greater priority.

Those ultra-traditional schools that clung onto the old style were increasingly in trouble, as new buyers and even many traditional families began to gravitate to prep schools that

continued to espouse traditional values but promoted them in a more contemporary and comfortable style. There is enough anxiety associated with young children's boarding without sadistic staff, dingy dorms and smelly loos adding to it.

Boarding prep schools nowadays, even the more 'old-fashioned' single-sex ones, are very different from the stereotype still hawked around by the disaffected. A school like Port Regis today is light years removed from what I encountered at Cordwalles and that quaint little school in Scotland. Gone are the outdated notions that children should be seen and not heard and that creature comforts and emotional nurturing will only spoil the child.

Today children have comfortable, healthy and happy lives at school, and I have no doubt whatsoever that this enhances their learning, their feelings of self-worth and their relationships with peers, adults and institutions. Treat the children with affection and kindness and they will respond to reasonable requests and behave in a civilised way – just as they do at home.

*Peter Dix retired as Headmaster of Port Regis in 2010 and now, following in the footsteps of John Clare, answers educational questions posed by readers of The Daily Telegraph.*

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Bedford Modern student offered place on USA sports scholarship programme

Priya Bhatti, a Bedford Modern School Year 12 student, is delighted to have been offered a place on the First Point USA Sports Scholarship programme, undertaking a degree and playing soccer.

"I began playing football for fun when I was five years old," said Priya. "Having grown up with two brothers and male cousins I became passionate about the game and now play for the Milton Keynes Dons Ladies' Football Team."

When Priya was 15 years old she was accepted at the Milton Keynes Dons Centre of Excellence and now plays in the First and Reserves Milton Keynes Ladies' Football Team. "Practice nights are Tuesdays and Thursdays involving football and fitness training with matches scheduled for every Sunday. I play at Number 9 which is a centre midfield/up-front position," she added.

Now 16, Priya has ten GCSEs, including five A\*s and three As, and is currently studying mathematics, chemistry, PE and psychology A levels. "A friend of mine went to America on a soccer scholarship and, after having looked at scholarship companies on the internet, I discovered the First Point USA Sports Scholarship programme.

"After submitting my application, I took part in an interview at Chelsea Football Stadium discussing the academic part of the scholarship. Afterwards, I took part in an assessment match in Hertfordshire before completing an American training session and then playing in a small football match. The American training session was a lot more practical and included less running," added Priya.

Representatives of First Point USA Sports Scholarship are now creating an academic and sporting profile of Priya via online links. Assessment matches take place each year and are recorded so that American coaches can assess players in live or replay clips from match action.

Following her A levels, Priya will be studying for a four-year degree in criminology, sports science or sports psychology at an American university. "My family has been extremely supportive and like the thought of visiting the USA. Female football players traditionally have played in America before gaining selection for the England Ladies' Football Team or becoming a professional player and this is something I hope to achieve," said Priya.



# “Education is important. It will make you free.”

Lorraine Nicholson's journey from East London to North Oxford

As I entered the gates of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, in October 1970, I paused a moment to reflect on my good fortune. A coloured (mixed race) girl from apartheid South Africa, one of a shoe repairer's nine children, I was about to read zoology at the university of my dreams. What got me to that point?

In South Africa in the 1950s, children went to school from the age of six, though education for non-whites was not compulsory. I was born and educated in East London, on the south-eastern coast, where there were two primary schools for non-whites: one for Roman Catholics, run by nuns, the other a state school.

As my family was Anglican I was destined for the state school, St John's Road Primary School, which I entered in January 1951 at the age of five. I was under school age, but my cousin, who was six, would not go to school without me. Fortunately the Principal was a family friend, so I was taken on as a passenger, not as a pupil, on the school roll. At the end of the year, however, I sat and passed the first year exams, so when the school officially enrolled me as a new pupil, I had already moved into the next class. From then on, up to university, I was a year ahead of my age group.

The children at the school were mainly coloured and Indian, with a few Chinese. In the complex and arbitrary way the authorities categorised the many races that were neither black nor white, they classified the Chinese as honorary whites: they could go to white schools, but not marry whites. The school had two streams in each year, one taught in English and the other in Afrikaans. My cousin was moved into the Afrikaans stream as it was felt that we should be separated and I remained in the English stream.

Being younger than other children in my class made me work harder and I enjoyed my schoolwork. We had wonderfully dedicated teachers who took a pride in their work and wanted us to be as good we could be. Mr Prince and Mr Murphy, who taught me in Standards 4 and 5 respectively, the top two classes in the primary school, were particularly encouraging, as a lot of children dropped out after primary school to go and work.

When I passed Standard 5 at the age of 11, Mr Murphy wrote in my report that I 'had a bright scholastic future'. My parents were keen for us to stay at school, especially my mother. She always said: "Education is important. It will make you free."

I didn't know at the time what that meant! My mother was born and grew up a Muslim and had to leave school when she reached puberty. She became a Christian only after marrying my father. My eldest sister, Joan, left school when she reached puberty too, as my Muslim grandfather would not let her mix with boys. My eldest brother, Robert, being a boy, was more fortunate and he went on to become a doctor and, since my grandfather died when I was seven, the rest of us were spared. The next sister became a nurse and the third eldest a teacher.

After seven years in the primary school I moved next door to John Bisseker High School at the age of 12. There I flourished and learned to love reading the classics, encouraged by the many good teachers who instilled in us a pride in who we were. On the other hand there was a white domestic science teacher who made us feel as if her object was to prepare us to be household servants.

It was around this time that I first realised that I was a second-class citizen and that I was not free to do what I wanted. Of course I had always known that there were different races in South Africa



*The passport photograph of Lorraine Goodley, aged 17.*

*Roma and the Maluti Mountains.*



but, because North End, the area of East London where I lived, was completely mixed, we all played together even though we went to different schools, churches and 'bioscopes' (as we called cinemas). In the late 1960s, after I had left, North End (including my parents' home) was cleared and demolished under the Group Areas Act, which segregated the races.

At secondary school I always had good maths and science teachers and I decided quite early that I would go to university after I matriculated, even though I only knew two women in East London who had gone to university, which required an exemption pass in six subjects at Matric. English and Afrikaans were compulsory, as were maths and science. My other two subjects were biology and geography.

The pupils at my school took the same public exams as white children, though our facilities were much poorer and I was for many years the only girl from John Bisseker High School to go to university. Some went on to teacher training or nursing, but it would be many more years before another girl was able to follow me to graduate status.

I matriculated at the age of 16 and was awarded a scholarship from the East London Municipality to study at a South African university. Here the problems of my race first presented difficulties. I applied to Fort Hare University, my brother being a graduate (as was Nelson Mandela), to study for a BSc degree.

I was refused permission as Fort Hare had by then been classified as a university for Bantu (blacks) only. Coloured students had to go to a college in Cape Town called Bellville where the only medium of teaching was Afrikaans. When I explained that Afrikaans was not my first language and that I would not be able to cope, I was told that I could do my exams in English but that I would have to attend all lectures in Afrikaans.

I therefore applied to another non-white college in Natal, Westville, where the teaching was in English, but here I was refused entry on the grounds that it was now restricted to Indians only, and referred back to Bellville. My best way forward, it appeared, was to apply to study medicine, which I could do at any university since there were no special medical colleges for the different races. They all studied together, but non-white students were not allowed to work on white bodies.

At that stage, I heard of a local Indian boy studying at Pius XII College at Roma in the British protectorate of Basutoland, now Lesotho. Although Pius XII College was for Roman Catholic students, the local priest knew me and agreed to give me a reference since some of my family were Catholic.

I applied to Roma and was accepted. East London municipality was persuaded that Roma was in South Africa – and indeed the degrees were awarded by the University of South Africa – so they reluctantly agreed to pay my scholarship and the chance came my way to change my life.

Pius XII College was set in the beautiful Roma valley, surrounded by the Maluti Mountains. Since there were fewer than 300 students we all knew each other and we were well cared for by the priests who ran it. Students came from the other British protectorates and from Rhodesia, Malawi and even Tanzania.

South African students there did not need passports, but,



*Lorraine Nicholson revisits the Roma University physics block.*

during my first vacation, the South African government announced that passports would now be needed to go to Basutoland. I immediately applied for one but, as the beginning of the second term came and went, no passport had arrived. I asked the local municipality for help but they were reluctant to get involved and I finally got my passport only eight weeks before the end of the academic year.

Two weeks later I was rushed to a hospital in the capital, Maseru, to have my appendix removed! Since I could not now take the first year exams in full, I concentrated on one subject, botany, which I passed and successfully applied to repeat the year. Although the municipality understandably refused to continue my grant, one of the lecturers obtained for me a UNESCO scholarship for the next four years.

This was just as well, since in 1964 Pius XII College became the University of Basutoland, Bechuanaland Protectorate and Swaziland, with four year degree courses instead of three under a new Vice-Chancellor from England, John W Blake.

The new university's curriculum was planned and administered by an influx of English professors and lecturers, mainly from Oxford, which I assumed was the only university in England! By the time I left I knew better, but remained convinced that Oxford, if not the only, was certainly the best.

I worked hard at Roma. Class sizes were small, which meant that each lecture was like a tutorial. We had to concentrate and participate fully and the lecturers went to a lot of trouble to make sure that we understood what we were discussing. Most of the priests who lectured continued to do so and remained responsible for the wellbeing of the Roman Catholic students.

One wonderful Irish priest, Father Denis Fahy, looked after the wellbeing of science students and he was my mentor during all my years there, even after a Dean of students was appointed. He was my guide through my studies and for years after I graduated.

Father Fahy advised me to get a new passport since mine was restricted to travel to Lesotho. The university registrar, also a priest, wrote a letter saying that I needed the endorsements as we were going on a field trip to Bechuanaland, Swaziland and Rhodesia on one of the vacations during my course, which was not true. We hoped that the stamp for those countries might include a few more and it did. As well as the three countries I

## South Africa

had asked for, I got Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania.

I graduated in 1967, the first woman science graduate of the new university, by then called the University of Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland. As Lesotho was now independent, degrees from its university were no longer recognised in South Africa, so I couldn't continue my studies there. On the other hand, leaving Africa to study was out, as the authorities in Pretoria were not in favour of non-whites going abroad to study except on a one-way exit permit.

Father Fahy suggested that I go to Zambia, already endorsed on my passport. This newly independent country had hardly any graduates and was desperate for qualified teachers. They invited Commonwealth graduates to study for a one year Postgraduate Certificate in Education at the new University of Zambia, moderated by the University of London.

All our expenses were paid and, in exchange, we had to teach in Zambia for two years. My PGCE was awarded in 1969 and I got a science post at Kabulonga School for Girls (formerly Jean Rennie School for Girls) in Lusaka and there, on my graduation day, I met my future husband, Jonathan, an English lawyer and a member of the law faculty of the University of Zambia.

In 1970, when my time in Zambia was coming to an end, Father Fahy suggested that I think about studying abroad. Many friends had gone to Canada and the USA, but Father Fahy advised me to go to England and, naturally, I thought of Oxford.

Father Fahy suggested that I apply to Lady Margaret Hall and write to the then Principal, Dame Lucy Sutherland, telling her about my wish to study at Oxford, saying I needed a scholarship. To my surprise she replied immediately, asking for references, and promising to try her best to find a scholarship for me.

A few weeks later she wrote that LMH had a Commonwealth Scholarship that they had not awarded for a few years, though I

would have to take an entrance examination before they could award it to me. I wrote back immediately to say that I was not eligible as South Africa had left the Commonwealth! However, I took the entrance exam and received a beautiful printed scroll saying that I had been awarded a scholarship at LMH for Commonwealth students. An asterisk after the word 'Commonwealth' referred to the words 'and South Africa', which had been typed in!

I was even excused the first year of the zoology degree in view of my experience. Once again I needed to extend the validity of my passport, but this time I could apply at the South African consulate in Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe). They were more sympathetic than Pretoria and I got my endorsement, including most of Europe.

After my first year at Oxford, Jonathan returned from Zambia and we married and I embarked on my final battle with South African officialdom. I wrote to the South African Embassy in London to register my marriage certificate, only to receive the reply that: 'As you have committed an act incompatible with the laws of South Africa, you are no longer a citizen. Please return your passport immediately.'

Because apartheid legislation forbade marriage between whites and non-whites, I became stateless for a while. At the time we never thought that apartheid would come to an end, let alone that we could live together in South Africa, but that is what I am doing as I write this. I wish I had kept that letter and framed it.

*Lorraine Nicholson (née Goodley) taught biology at Redlands High School, Bristol; science and chemistry at Downend School, Bristol; and chemistry at St Dunstan's Abbey School, Plymouth.*

## HERE & THERE

### Equestrian star Erin is riding high

One of the country's most promising young equestrians is riding high after helping the British team to third place at France's premier dressage show.

Erin Williams, a pupil at Mount St Mary's College in Spinkhill, and her pony Danny Boy B, were part of the national team that took bronze at the Concours de Dressage International. Year 7 pupil Erin was one of four pony riders representing Great Britain at the event, which was staged at the impressive Cadre Noir, Saumur, in the Loire Valley.

The 12-year-old, who lives in Barlow, Derbyshire, and her pony starred in the Team Test class, where she was the second highest of the four Great Britain riders, and finished ninth out of 40.



# Sage and Brushwood

Arthur Hearnden reviews Jonty Driver's lecture on Robert Birley

This second Gladstone Lecture, delivered by Jonty Driver at Eton on 27th April 2010, is a heartfelt tribute from a former HMC Head to a (very) former HMC Chairman. Chairman for four years, no less, Robert Birley was, as Head Master of Eton, a towering figure in the public school world of the 1950s and early 1960s. Jonty had good reason to revere the man who rescued him from a hazardous future in South Africa and put him on a path that led to three Headships, first in Hong Kong and then at Berkhamsted and Wellington College. Here the most favoured protégé has seized an appropriate opportunity to record his profound gratitude to a remarkable mentor and father figure.

The two first met shortly after Robert, newly retired from Eton, had taken up the post of Professor of Education at the University of Witwatersrand ('Wits'). Jonty had been elected president of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and his vice president, Maeder Osler, was keen that they should meet this new arrival on the education scene.

Unimpressed by Birley's title, Jonty agreed with some reluctance. But to be greeted warmly, sat down in an armchair with a large glass of sherry and given the impression that there was all the time in the world to listen, was unexpected and disarming. By the end he was well and truly under the sage's spell.

The rapport is not difficult to explain. Before becoming Head Master of Eton, Robert Birley had been educational adviser to the Military Governor of the British Zone of occupied Germany after the Second World War. This had brought him into contact with a number of courageous survivors of persecution under the Nazis. They were heroes in his eyes and inspired in him an urge to support resistance to oppression wherever it was to be found.

The parallel with the NUSAS criticism of the apartheid regime was obvious. It was only a few years since the police had killed 69 black demonstrators at Sharpeville and only a few months since the African National Congress leader, Nelson Mandela, had been imprisoned.

So it was against a background of oppression that Birley had come to Wits and there was a particular educational dimension to his appointment. A few years earlier the government had withdrawn from the universities the right to admit students regardless of colour. The intention was, quite overtly, to phase out completely the opportunities for blacks to study alongside whites.

Wits had, admittedly, only a small number of black students, but even this number would go, such links as existed with their schools would be broken and apartheid in higher education



Robert and Elinor Birley in South Africa.

would be complete. Birley's brief was to keep the university in touch with Bantu education, a role that he took to with gusto. He poured boundless energy into supporting the high schools of Soweto where he taught classes with complete disregard for established barriers.

In defying authority in this way Birley came to be something of a hero in Soweto. He helped to raise funds for a new library at Orlando High School and the Headmaster was forbidden to name it after him. When the school authorities protested about this to the officials of the Department of Bantu Education they declared: "Professor Birley is one of our own people."

And being *persona non grata* with the government made him *persona very grata* with the students at Wits. As Jonty points out in the lecture, if you say NUSAS with a strong South African accent, it sounds a bit like 'nuisance' and that was how he and his colleagues in the Union were regarded in white South Africa.

At the heart of Jonty's lecture is his wish, or more accurately need, to leave the country. He was under pressure from the Minister of Justice to resign as president of NUSAS and the prospect loomed of being detained and having his passport confiscated. His ambition was now to escape to study at Oxford and to find a teaching post to enable him to satisfy the immigration authorities.

The lengths to which Birley went in helping him to do so are on record, as he was a compulsive correspondent as well as, to put it crudely, a consummate fixer – long handwritten letters to say that he had found a job for Jonty first at Marlborough then



*Robert Birley as Head Master of Eton.*

at Sevenoaks, that he was arranging a place at Trinity, then at New College ‘as a long stop’, and finally that he would ‘clear the whole thing up when I am in England’.

The story has a dramatic twist. In Jonty’s words: “The evening before I was due to leave on a Union Castle liner from Cape Town I was arrested by the South African security police under the provisions of the 90-day detention act, which enabled them to hold me in solitary confinement, with no access to a lawyer.”

Happily, after a month he was released without charge and able to retrieve his passport, which he had had the presence of mind to hide. Now Oxford beckoned. Looking back, the whole episode evokes vividly the atmosphere of intimidation in South Africa in those years. And the resistance to it by a very spirited member of HMC. It was just a pity that the old campaigner didn’t live to see the transformation from police state to democracy.

*Arthur Hearnden is a former General Secretary of ISC and the author of Red Robert, a biography of Sir Robert Birley, sometime Headmaster of Eton and Charterhouse and Chairman of HMC.*

*C J (Jonty) Driver was Principal of Island School, Hong Kong, Headmaster of Berkhamsted and Master of Wellington College. He edited Conference & Common Room from 1990 to 1999 and is now a full-time writer.*

A few remaining copies of the printed version of the Second Gladstone Lecture, *Robert Birley and South Africa*, given by Jonty Driver at Eton in April 2010, are available from Ann

Driver at Apple Yard Cottage, Mill Lane, Northiam, TN31 6JU. Please send an A5 SAE with appropriate stamps. The ‘essay in biography’ from which the lecture is abstracted, *Orient and Immortal Wheat*, forms part of an as yet unpublished collection of essays, provisionally entitled *Friends & Mentors*.

The editor hopes readers will enjoy these two postscripts:

### Late lesson

She likes the edge of gardens best,  
Where wilderness comes sidling in  
Like pupils late to class. Her eyes  
Are drawn to where the gaps in walls  
Allow a view of burnished fields  
In summer blaze, and then the dark  
Where meadows meet the upland pines.

Below the hedge the weeds sneak back  
To stretch their tendrils out, and catch  
To climb and climb, evading blades  
By twisting in, the lighter greens  
Of beech entwined with ivy leaves.  
The paths are wrapped in dappled light  
By tangled stuff the strimmer missed.

The judgements that she used to make  
(So profligate) – “a clever girl”,  
“A naughty boy” (the sort she liked  
Though never said) – have disappeared  
Like end-of-season daffodils;  
Their names are with her still, though now  
No longer tied to how they looked.

Jack-by-the-hedge, and Lady’s-smock,  
Or Old Man’s Beard and briar rose,  
All things that should have been expelled,  
Come creeping, creeping back; and thus  
A garden turns to what it was:  
“I learned too late to let things be,”  
She sighs to fields that flow away.

*C J Driver*

*from Red Robert A life of Robert Birley*

Outside the school the impression of left-wing sympathies was greatly magnified by the nickname ‘Red Robert’ which Birley very soon acquired. It was entirely fitting that the myth of his dangerous radicalism should derive from a case of mistaken identity. The origin of the phrase was this. Elinor’s sister-in-law was a member of a very superior bridge club in London where the appointment of the new Head Master was greeted with some dismay. The reason was that another member of the club had been to Berlin and afterwards confided to fellow bridge-players that Birley had a picture of Karl Marx hanging in his office there. The grounds for this piece of gossip were delicious. In the next-door office to Birley’s worked a man called Armitage who was responsible for travel arrangements. As a result, many visitors had occasion to go to this office without ever going to see Birley himself. It was above the travel desk that the bridge-player had seen the shocking picture. The explanation lay in Armitage’s passion for music and the visiting bridge-player’s inability to distinguish between a portrait of Marx and one of Brahms.

*Arthur Hearnden*

# Astronauts in nautical capital

Ellen Davis has seen visitors from space

If you had told anyone at The Portsmouth Grammar School that they would be hosting a team of astronauts from the last scheduled mission of space shuttle *Atlantis* at a gala dinner onboard *HMS Warrior*, and later be involved in a frenzy of interviews and events with them, they would not have believed you.

Needless to say, this is exactly what happened, as the school never fails to present us all with incredible opportunities, and the arrival of the astronauts was awaited with great excitement and anticipation from all. The crew from mission STS-132 arrived in late June to tour the United Kingdom, with their first stop being the naval city of Portsmouth. They were welcomed into the Historic Dockyard for a gala dinner on board the great ship.

*HMS Warrior* proved to be a more than fitting setting for the arrival of people so heavily involved in the world of science and exploration, being a symbol of British exploration and technological advancements herself, and indeed the guest list didn't disappoint. Representatives from EADS Astrium (the company hoping to transport the first space tourists) and the International Space School Educational Trust (ISSET) followed David Willetts MP and the astronomer Sir Patrick Moore onto the gundeck. However it was mission commander Ken Ham and his colleagues, pilot Tony Antonelli and mission specialists Garrett Reisman, Steve Bowen and Piers Sellers, that everyone was really waiting to meet.

The crew had only landed back on Earth after a 12-day trip to the International Space Station a month and a day before their arrival in Portsmouth. That mission consisted of delivering and installing the Russian-built Mini Research Module-1 together

with some additional cargo, and three spacewalks were scheduled to stage spare components on the space station's exterior. But the team's work for NASA doesn't stop when they are on firm ground, as one of the essential parts of their job is to spread a message and to encourage youngsters and adults alike to discover or nurture an interest in science in order that space exploration can continue.

The crew's visit to Portsmouth marked the end of the 2010 Portsmouth Festivities with a magnificent daytime fireworks display at Southsea Bandstand, before they re-formed at the Historic Dockyard for a presentation at Action Stations and the ensuing gala dinner.

Mr Priory, Headmaster at PGS, and David Willetts, MP for Havant and the Minister for Universities and Science, welcomed the crew, making clear by their presence that the aim of the visit from all involved was to educate, to teach. Chris Barber, director of ISSET and one of the people who made the visit of the astronauts possible said: "The main purpose of bringing the astronauts a third of the way round the planet is to let our boys and girls know that these were ordinary school children just like them at one time. They applied themselves, they had dreams, they had ambitions and they worked towards fulfilling them."

Indeed, not a single child or adult in the audience did not feel awe at the success of these men when watching the world premiere of the film they shot in space, a film that truly demonstrated the power of those dreams. However the team made it clear that a dream alone is not enough: it is the perseverance and commitment to obtain it that counts, proven by

*Keeping order in the capsule is crucial.*



## In transit



*Ken Ham presents a well-travelled Union Jack.*



*Why, Emily Nelson's my name too.*

the endless lists of degrees, Master's and doctorates that follow their names.

The gala dinner on board HMS *Warrior* allowed VIPs, space fans and PGS students to question the astronauts about their mission, their lives, their experiences, and it seemed to many of us that no matter how many anecdotes, photos or videos we are shown, we cannot comprehend the reality of space travel without experiencing it ourselves.

Obviously not all of us are destined for a career in space and science, but Commander Ken Ham made it clear to me over dessert that no matter what area my ambitions lie in, I could reach them if I study hard and bounce back up if ever I fall down. Even people with well-established careers could learn from these inspiring men.

In acknowledgement of their visit, Rear Admiral John Lippiett, who is now the chief executive of the Mary Rose Trust, presented the group with a piece of Henry VIII's flagship with the hope it will one day make it into space. Other guests who had the opportunity to shake the hand of an astronaut included the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth and her consort, mathematical and scientific writer Simon Singh, the broadcaster, writer and PGS parent Professor Jim Al-Khalili, as well as other leading figures in science, media, the Portsmouth City Council, Portsmouth University and the Portsmouth Football Club.

Perhaps the most important members of the audience the astronauts faced were the students and children, teenagers and aspiring scientists that swarmed to get a glimpse of the heroes the following day. Ken Ham, his wife Michelle, Garrett Reisman and Emily Nelson arrived at PGS, where they inspected not only our CCF but also the new science centre, where they were more than impressed at the school's dedication to science.

In a chat show setting, Ken and Michelle, who is an astronaut training instructor, were interviewed by students, for students. The interview allowed pupils to ask the astronauts questions about their origins, their pathways into their careers and the experience of space travel. Yet no matter what questions were being asked, the emphasis always came back to the importance of acquiring knowledge, making the setting of a school all the more significant. From the necessity of learning how to work in a team, all aspects of study and education were underlined as key to a career such as theirs or, indeed, any truly successful career.

During the chat show the other astronauts were kept busy. Garrett and Emily (the lead flight director for the STS-132 shuttle mission) headed to the junior school, and others could be

found at Portsmouth University, the Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Highbury College campus and EADS Astrium.

Later they reconvened at Fratton Park, home of Portsmouth Football Club, to talk to thousands of students from across the Portsmouth area and, despite being bombarded with countless more questions and talking to children of a different age, the crew still found themselves focusing on learning, showing that this really is the key to their message and to their success.

The team also emphasised how continuous schooling needs to be matched with a constant thirst for knowledge and a determination to do better and try harder. It delights me to say that, despite the tremendous experience I had in meeting the astronauts and working with them, in getting their autographs and being presented with a memento of their visit to the International Space Station on behalf of PGS, what I have truly come away with is an enormous amount of passion and intrigue.

Our visitors have allowed me to see the real value of learning, perseverance and determination, and I like to think that other students came away with this same drive. I am no physicist, but the crew have made me rethink the way I look at science as a subject, and my views on education in general, have been revised. How apt it is too, as the 'unsung heroes' of science are the educators, the science teachers, that it should have been PGS physics teacher Jeremy Thomas who made the visit of the astronauts possible and who is aiding aspiring space shuttle pilots and the like by organising visits to the Kennedy Space Center.

Revealingly, when Commander Ham was asked what he would like to be "when he grows up", he answered firmly and finally, "a High School Teacher". His inspirational talks suggest his second career would be just as successful as his first.

*Ellen Davis is a Year 13 pupil at The Portsmouth Grammar School.*



*Even astronauts have mascots.*

# The customer is always right: parents in the independent sector

Sue Bricket waxes lyrical

I have nothing against parents. Some of my best friends are parents; I have parents of my own; I'm actually a parent myself so what follows is not blind prejudice but simply a few observations about what it is like to work in partnership with some of the most demanding consumers out there.

If this were going to be a balanced and fair article, I would begin by mentioning all the parents who turn up at the end of the school year accompanied by their mortified offspring clutching beautifully wrapped gifts.

These gifts need not be opened in order to establish that they are, in fact, scented candles. For some years now I have been stockpiling these as part of my cunning plan to avoid teaching until my 85th birthday. I will shortly be opening a chain of shops under the brand name Wax and Wayne. This would involve going into partnership with someone called Wayne but it's a sacrifice I'm prepared to make.

I must admit that, just occasionally, I wish that parents did not always make their selection of propitiatory offerings on quite such predictable and gender-oriented lines. Some of my male colleagues are well placed to open an off-licence in retirement, but I never receive so much as a bottle of Babycham as a reward for my labours.

Schools work in partnership with parents. It *is* a partnership – we hear that all the time – but it is surely an unequal one. I'm not quite sure whose fault that is. Are parents to blame for believing that they know their children best or are teachers to blame for believing that only they have true insight into the workings of little Matilda/Sebastian's mind? Whichever is the case, it can lead to a very uncomfortable partnership indeed.

For evidence we need look no further than a typical phone call in which the hapless member of staff tries to discuss what is going on with Sebastian that has caused him to scrawl particularly colourful graffiti on another pupil's book. "It can't have been Sebastian," the parent states. "I know my son and he would never do that. He doesn't even know those words. We don't use words like that in our house. What sort of school are you running if pupils are going around using words like that? I'll have to consider withdrawing my son if he's going to be exposed to obscenities. What are you doing to protect my child?"

At this point it is essential, as a teacher, not to panic: you need to keep calm and hold on to the fact that you actually *saw* little Sebastian, pen in hand, putting the final flourish on the offending graffiti. Knowing this does not mean that you will convince the parent, who may well quiz you in detail and put it to you that Sebastian may simply have been colouring in the offending graffiti, which must have been done by some other (less well brought up) child. It is a conversation doomed to end unsatisfactorily with the hovering threat of withdrawing the child editing the teacher's response and highlighting the uneasy nature of the partnership we have with parents when they are fee-paying consumers.



*Mr Tricket,  
I presume?*

This relationship becomes even more strained when parents behave in ways that are clearly utterly unreasonable. (I would say 'barking mad' but this could lead to legal action by parents, which is bad for parent/school partnership.) Every school has its share of unreasonable parents and examples of their astonishing behaviour. Some may think the following examples most unlikely but it's quite early in the school year so I have not yet started to lose my grip on reality and I can assure you these are roughly true.

Take for example the parent who rang to complain in the most vicious way that she had received a letter asking that her child should be at school at 8am for a school trip. She had, she complained, duly brought him in at great inconvenience, only to find that the arrangements were shambolic and the trip did not leave until 8.45, meaning that her son could have come in on the bus as normal.

You may be thinking that she had a point but, if you factor in that what delayed the trip was that staff were waiting for *her* and that everyone else had been ready to leave at 8am as planned, it

## Parents

does rather alter the perspective. Bizarrely, she could not grasp this fairly simple point and continued to maintain most forcefully that the trip should have left at the scheduled time even when a slightly frustrated colleague pointed out that her son, and her son alone, would have been left behind.

Odd behaviour perhaps, but it pales into insignificance when put alongside one encounter I had at a parents' evening. It was late. Perhaps the parent in question had had a mauling at the hands of colleagues. I will never know. Whatever the case may be, she struck a low blow.

Sliding gently into the seat opposite me, she took out an envelope and held it out saying: "This is for you." It was obviously not another scented candle, let alone a bottle, but a small part of me thought that it might be a charming handmade card containing a few words of gratitude about all I had done for her child. It was not to be. Glancing at the envelope, I realised she had made an error.

"This is addressed to Mr Tricket," I said pleasantly. She looked at me blankly.

"Aren't you Mr Tricket?"

Now, I do admit that it was getting towards the end of a long evening, but I like to think that it would still have been possible to identify me as a woman rather than a man, albeit one with a similar surname. All sorts of possible replies popped into my mind but in the end all I did was stand up so that she had the opportunity to notice my skirt and high heels before saying: "No, Mr Tricket is the man over there." She wandered off without a word and I still don't know whether she realised her mistake or just ended up thinking her son was being taught by a cross-dresser in denial.

Perhaps teachers are too restrained when dealing with parents these days. If older colleagues are to be believed, parents used to fall into line more easily and could be spoken to more frankly. A colleague was bemoaning this development recently and hankering after the good old days.

Apparently, some years ago, a parent had rung up to complain that their child had been given too low a grade on a report. My colleague patiently explained that the grade represented an average of the marks earned by the pupil during the assessment period. The parent then protested that the child had been working at a much higher level and should have a better grade.

"Oh, sorry," said my colleague, "There's clearly been a misunderstanding. I thought that the purpose of the report was for *me* to tell *you* how your child was doing. Perhaps I should contact you before the next report and you can tell me how he's doing so I'll know which grade to enter." Would anybody say this now? I like to think *I* would, but then I write under the cover of a pseudonym.

By this stage, you may be wondering when the whimsy is going to end and the serious points will be made. Frankly, I'm wondering this too and am beginning to suspect that a better use of my time would be to revert to my default mental activity, which is dreaming up other possible names for my candle emporium: Wax Nostalgic (too soppy); Snuff and Nonsense (too critical of own wares); Candle (too minimalist); Scent 'n' wax (maybe not). Ah well, 'Wax and Wayne' it is then, so I'll have to continue dealing with parents for a good few years unless the right Wayne comes along.

*Sue Bricket has been following developments at Manchester United with interest.*

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmplc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmplc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### QEGS Beat MCC

Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School in Blackburn has a fine sporting tradition, but even so the defeat of the MCC team by the school's 1st XI cricketers in May was a particular highlight. The win, by seven wickets, completed a hat-trick of victories for the school in this annual fixture. Unbeaten half-centuries from fifth-former Jack Taylor and upper sixth student Sam Chatburn-Jones helped the school to 173 for 3 in response to the MCC's 167 for 6 at Alexandra Meadows, the home of Lancashire League club, East Lancs CC, which is located next door to the school. Whilst the feat may not be unique, it is certainly unique for QEGS, though the school has produced a number of county cricketers down the years, including past professionals Kevin Hayes (Lancashire) and Duncan Catterall (Worcestershire) and current players Michael Brown (Surrey) and his brother David (Glamorgan).



# East End to East Africa

Russell Matcham updates the Haileybury Mission

A century after Haileybury old boy Clement Attlee's life was transformed following his work for the Haileybury Guild among the poor of London, his old school continues to improve lives, albeit in East Africa rather than the East End.

Originally established in 1890 as a Guild for Old Haileyburians to help in parishes at the time the Public School Missions were also emerging, Haileybury Boys' Club was located in Stepney and included a gymnasium, a drill hall and club rooms.

The premise of the Haileybury Guild was simple: what the East End boy needed 'was just those things that filled and made (Haileyburians') life at school, and for the lack of which his life was starved'. It was found that the best way of organising these impoverished boys and giving them a sense of pride, discipline and self-esteem was not only to occupy them with games and recreational activity, but also to establish a military tradition.

The boys were given a uniform and made Cadets, while the Club's training corps became a company of the London Regiment. Boys from the Haileybury Guild fought and died in three wars and one was awarded a VC. While physical and military drill and boxing were central activities – twice weekly parades took place for the next 100 years – classes were also organised in skills like leatherwork and woodwork from which the products might be sold.

It was to the Haileybury Boys' Club that the young Attlee first arrived in 1905, having just come down from Oxford. It was his first real encounter with social deprivation and was, he wrote later, 'a day that was destined to alter the whole course of my life'. Attlee became manager of the Club and lived there until the outbreak of war. It was his experiences in Stepney that led him to a career in socialist politics.



*Haileybury Boys' Club, with their manager, in 1905...*

After a century of working in the East End, however, Haileybury's support was no longer needed. The people of Tower Hamlets were adept at finding other sources of funds and the old Boys' Club was sold back to the borough. But the spirit of service continued and the Trustees of Haileybury Youth Trust (HYT), as it had become, looked for new opportunities for the privileged of Haileybury to serve and learn alongside the impoverished youth of another community.

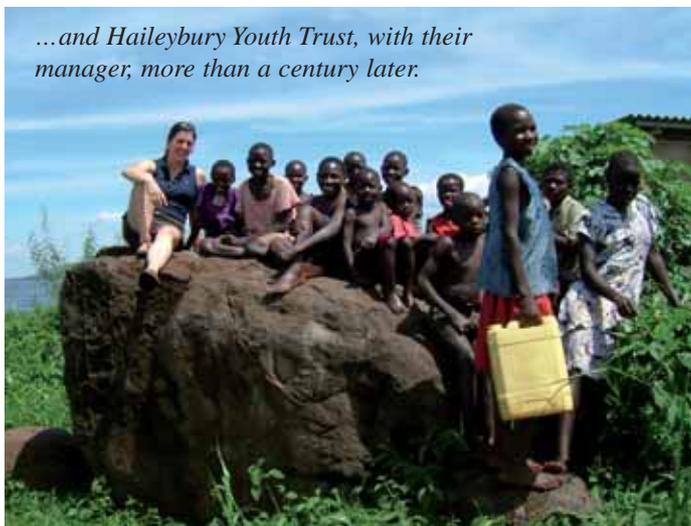
I had introduced Jim Cogan, late of Westminster School and founder of the gap-year charity SPW, to Uganda and he had introduced me to a remarkable technology that could transform lives in sub-Saharan Africa. There seemed to be an opportunity for the wider school community to engage in useful development a world away from Haileybury – and to be enriched by it.

HYT has embarked on a programme of sustainable development in rural Uganda that is different from other, more conventional, school partnerships. Although many British independent schools enjoy fruitful links with schools in Africa and support building projects such as classrooms, science labs and libraries, there is perhaps not always an awareness of the environmental consequences.

Traditional construction in much of Africa uses hand-moulded clay bricks. The widespread use of these bricks is, however, devastating the landscape, as vast quantities of firewood are required for the kilns that produce them. Not only that, huge amounts of carbon dioxide are emitted in the firing of the brick kilns and fragile biodiversity is further depleted.

It is estimated that 140,000 new homes are required every year in Uganda and that it takes land clearance of an area the size of two tennis courts to produce the bricks for each of these homes.

*...and Haileybury Youth Trust, with their manager, more than a century later.*



## Reaching out



*HYT Volunteers in Uganda.*

That's 280,000 tennis courts' worth of trees lost every year. Free and universal primary education means that many new schools are also needed for this fast growing and youthful population. Eager charities and indeed British schools unwittingly contribute to this emerging environmental catastrophe as they continue to build with traditional fired bricks.

Haileybury Youth Trust, however, promotes an alternative construction technology that could have a far-reaching impact across sub-Saharan Africa. HYT encourages the adoption of an Interlocking Stabilised Soil Block (ISSB), which compresses a moistened mixture of subsoil and a small amount of cement in a mould that produces oblong blocks which are cured, not fired. No firewood is used and no trees chopped down. Ancient forests and biodiversity are preserved and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions drastically reduced. The interlocking features of the block mean it is stronger, cheaper and quicker as a construction resource.

Not only does the use of the ISSB technology meet basic humanitarian needs while preserving the environment and

reducing carbon emissions, it also offers employment and income-generating opportunities. HYT has recently completed the first phase of a five-year project, One Village at a Time, where ten rural villages will be transformed in a programme of sustainable development that will include training, education and construction.

Schools are an effective focus for its promotion, as they often have large roof areas (good for rain-water harvesting and storage in ISSB-built water tanks); a diverse community of children, parents and teachers; and can offer training opportunities for future employment. School students can also make blocks in their spare time, earning pocket money and acquiring skills, while recognising the need to safeguard their beautiful but fragile environment.

Working alongside its permanent staff, Ugandan engineers and local trainees, pre- and post-university gap-year students from Haileybury spend time volunteering for the Trust deep in the African bush, pioneering the use of this simple block. The United Nations department for human settlement, UN Habitat, has visited projects, endorsing HYT's work, as has the Department for International Development.

The project is a life-enhancing experience for the privileged young people of Haileybury, just as it was for the Haileyburians who spent time at the Stepney Club, while also contributing in a small but important way to development in some of Africa's poorest communities. With Haileyburians and Ugandans working shoulder to shoulder, this technology provides a solution to an African crisis, without costing the earth. We like to think Attlee would be pleased.

*Russell Matcham is coordinator of the Haileybury Youth Trust and a Housemaster at Haileybury College.*

More information about HYT can be found at: [www.haileyburyyouthtrust.com](http://www.haileyburyyouthtrust.com)

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Nottingham High School welcomes Sir Michael Parkinson

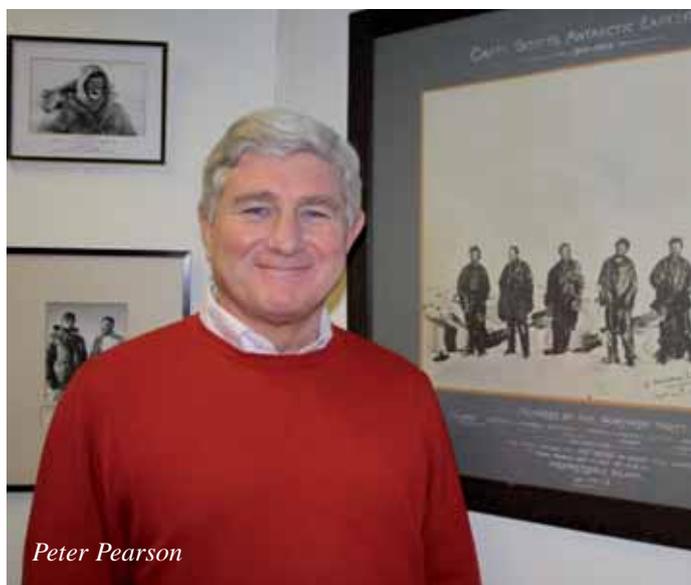
Nottingham High School welcomed Sir Michael Parkinson as guest speaker at its annual Speech Day held at the Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham. Sir Michael, who has a long history of working in TV and radio, most notably presenting his interview programme, *Parkinson*, spoke at the event and presented prizes to the boys.

He also seemed to greatly enjoy the special jazz number performed by the school's Big Band, along with a solo performance of a Bach prelude by sixth form cellist George Watkinson.



# Values and Standards

Peter Pearson draws the British Schools Exploring Society to our attention



Peter Pearson

*We cannot always build the future for our youth,  
but we can build our youth for the future.*

Franklin D Roosevelt

Like many children of military personnel, I was brought up on the move. My father's postings saw to it that I had lived in Hong Kong, Malaya, Uganda and Kenya at various points during my schooldays and as a result mountains and jungles were no strangers to me. This adventurous childhood was endorsed by my own 35 years of service as a Gurkha officer, and so my current post as Executive Director of the British Schools Exploring Society holds few geographical terrors.

I have also been involved in youth development for most of my life, since the Army is very much about training young people and few posts embody this more fully than that of Commandant of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), the job I did in 2006 and 2007.

My post-retirement move was not planned, but when I was telephoned by a good chum while standing, by a quirk of fate, in the forecourt of Kwik Fit, and he uttered the immortal words "I have the absolutely perfect job for you", I had the time as well as the strong inclination to investigate this lead. And so it was that I landed my current job in a hugely worthy charity known, I hope, at least to some of you.

This may seem a strange move for an ex-career soldier, but I had increasingly thought that my life was, as Roosevelt put it, about building our youth for the future. Oscar Wilde said: "To get back to my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early or be respectable." He would not have lasted very long at the RMAS.

Indeed, I told the parents and relatives of the newly arrived cadets, over 70% of whom were graduates, that Sandhurst would turn the habits acquired at university upside down: there would now be four hours in bed and twenty hours hard at work, much of it at the double. Actually the pace of life soon eased, once the

shock of capture was over, because they had a great deal to learn.

Sandhurst is, fundamentally, about leadership development. Yes, some people are born leaders, but most of us have to work at it, developing the leadership characteristics that lie within us, which can be honed in the right setting and with the right teachers.

Developing leadership is as much about developing the character as anything else. Sandhurst does it in a unique way, mixing the physical with the intellectual and throwing in a healthy measure of the moral. My final address to the cadets always covered the enormous achievements that each individual had made, but I also reminded them of the 'moral compass' that they now all possessed.

For the Army expects all its ranks to live their life by a particular code of conduct, which is encapsulated in a document called simply *Values and Standards*. Its values are about character and spirit, and its standards define actions and behaviour. Most importantly, together they are vital to operational effectiveness, which makes them indispensable in a military context. In the final analysis, operational effectiveness is the standard by which an Army is judged and on which its reputation is based. If only other institutions and organisations approached their business in the same manner, we might not continually have to read about cheats in sport, scams in business and scandals in almost every walk of life, including the political arena.

These high ideals are at the heart of a special and successful organisation, the British Schools Exploring Society. Founded in 1932 by Surgeon Commander George Murray Levick, a member of Captain Scott's final expedition to the South Pole, it is the longest running organisation of its type and maintains a prime position in the field of outdoor education. Our broad objective is to support the personal development of people aged 16 to 23 through challenging expeditions with adventure and field study in remote wilderness areas overseas.

We pride ourselves on our unique approach to youth development. Crucially, we select individuals, not groups of school friends, to go on expeditions that are very much about





*Expeditions to the Arctic...*

self-enlightenment and fulfilment. The ‘inner journey’ is every bit as important as the more obvious outer one.

Our expedition leaders are more than simply experienced adventure leaders who teach the hard skills. They are also teachers and mentors who impart the softer, personal skills, values and virtues we try to imbue in our young explorers. In short, for those who take part, the expedition is very much about exploration – inside and out.

We try to take young people from as wide a spread of society as possible and are particularly proud of our outreach programme, the Dangoor Next Generation Programme, which is designed for young people who would not otherwise have the opportunity to go on an overseas expedition and benefit from the personal development it brings. Participants are typically aged 16-20, enrolled in education and accessing some form of social services. Some are former young offenders and all come from what could loosely be termed a ‘disadvantaged’ background.



*...and the Himalayas.*

This outreach programme has been running for four years and is about to increase by over fourfold in size. We like to think that it not only takes the participants out of what is often a vicious circle, but that it also sets them up to make something of their lives, bringing benefit to themselves, their families and to society in general.

For all the young explorers on BSES expeditions, this is a life-changing journey. Not only do they travel to awe-inspiring wilderness locations in the Himalayas, the Arctic, the Amazon and beyond, but they also take part in important scientific work, mostly in the field of bio-diversity or climate change. Expeditions for those at school or college range from three to six weeks in the summer holidays; those in their gap-year can go for a testing nine weeks in the spring.

It all begins with the young learning the increasingly important skill of marketing themselves, as they must all raise funds towards the venture. If what you have read has rung a bell and you feel that your young people would benefit from an adventure with a serious purpose, then please do not hesitate to get in touch. Someone somewhat younger than I am will be only too pleased to come to your school and give a talk, and much of the detail can be found on our website: [www.bses.org.uk](http://www.bses.org.uk)

*The task of leadership is not to put greatness into people, but to elicit it, for the greatness is there already.*

John Buchan

Working with the young, as you well know, has so many rewards.

*Peter Pearson has been executive director of the British Schools Exploring Society since 2010. He is also the Lieutenant of the Tower of London. Previously he was a Regular Army officer, retiring as a Lieutenant General and serving as Commandant of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from 2006 to 2007 in his penultimate posting.*

# A French connection

Paul Spillane on the cup provided by no less a person than Charles de Gaulle

You may be wondering why there has been a lioness in the Silcoates School Hall for over 60 years and why President Charles de Gaulle features at the school's annual prizegiving. Let me explain.

Doing some research in back numbers of the school magazine, I discovered that the 1930s were a golden age for French at Silcoates. In 1931 *The Silcoatian* records that: 'By creation of the President of the French Republic, the Headmaster (S H Moore) was made an Officier d'Académie, with the right to wear the purple ribbon and palmes académiques. At the presentation ceremony in London, the French Ambassador spoke of the Headmaster's service during a long period of years to the French language, literature and philology.'

In Moore's time the most able boys reached a very high standard in French. He encouraged the school's participation in the examinations of the Société Nationale des Professeurs de Français en Angleterre. Success in these examinations led to certificates and prizes for individuals; the winning school team was awarded a Sèvres Vase offered by the President of France.

Silcoates came second in 1932. The following year the school went one better and President Lebrun's prize was presented to Silcoates by the French Ambassador at the Mansion House. The school won again in 1933, but 'was disqualified by the rules from receiving the Vase itself for two years running'.

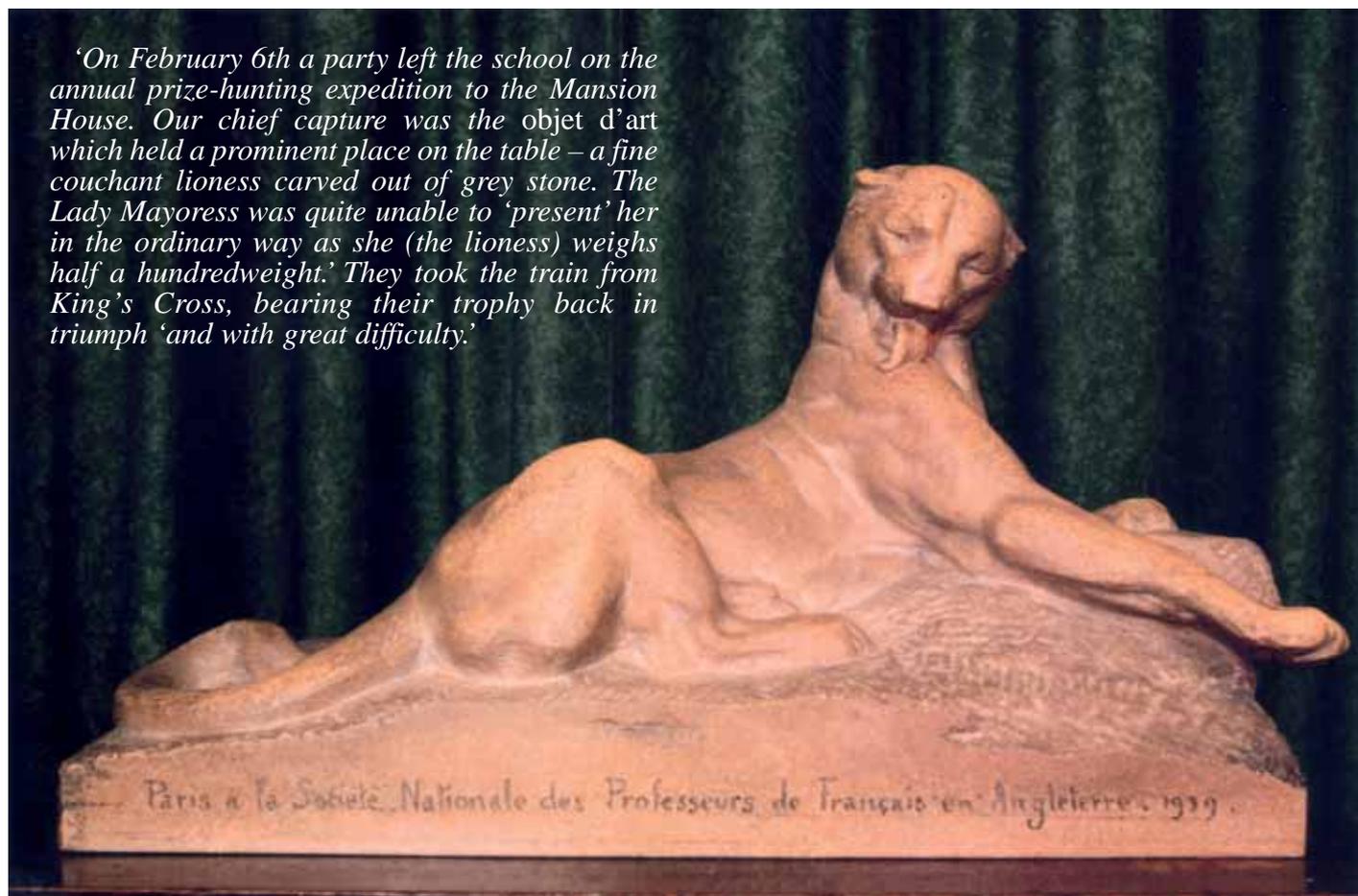
Between 1934 and 1936 the most brilliant scholar was Raymond Evans, who became an Exhibitioner of St John's College, Oxford, and, many years afterwards, Headmaster of his old school. He carried off the Médaille de Vermeil, awarded to the pupil holding first place among all entrants from all schools; the Gold Medal of the Société, 'the highest honour in French possible to an English boy'; and the Silver Medal of the Ministre de l'Éducation Nationale.

The 1936 Silcoates team of eight won the Sèvres Vase once more, with several of the participants earning prizes and certificates. More individual awards followed in 1937 and 1938. Then came the year of the lioness, a prize awarded to Silcoates by the City of Paris.

Silcoates' modern linguists clearly expected to do well, and they were not disappointed in 1939. 'On February 6th a party left the school on the annual prize-hunting expedition to the Mansion House. Our chief capture was the *objet d'art* which held a prominent place on the table – a fine couchant lioness carved out of grey stone. The Lady Mayoress was quite unable to 'present' her in the ordinary way as she (the lioness) weighs half a hundredweight.' They took the train from King's Cross, bearing their trophy back in triumph 'and with great difficulty.'

In 1940 a Silcoatian won the Senior Scholarship in Modern Languages at The Queen's College, Oxford: 'A scholarship now

*'On February 6th a party left the school on the annual prize-hunting expedition to the Mansion House. Our chief capture was the objet d'art which held a prominent place on the table – a fine couchant lioness carved out of grey stone. The Lady Mayoress was quite unable to 'present' her in the ordinary way as she (the lioness) weighs half a hundredweight.' They took the train from King's Cross, bearing their trophy back in triumph 'and with great difficulty.'*



## Reaching out

won for the third time in five years by Silcoates; no insignificant record for a small school, or indeed for any school.' In the same year the school team won 'the prize which before the fall of the Third Republic had brought with it the Sèvres Vase presented by the President'.

Needless to say, France was beset with concerns more pressing than a reward for a Yorkshire school's young prizewinners. General Charles de Gaulle had, however, lately arrived in London and, despite all that must have been occupying him, 'he stepped into the breach and offered a silver cup ... the school was proud to have the cup in its possession ... and hoped some day to have the General himself present that they might thank him in person'.

Unsurprisingly, that visit never took place and the rest indeed is history. From his exile in London General de Gaulle returned in glory to France and later became President of the Fifth Republic. My personal interest in the de Gaulle cup stemmed from an event in the summer holidays of 1964, when I was staying in Paris with my penfriend Etienne and his family. On a hot Sunday morning we went swimming in the Piscine Deligny, a public pool floating in the Seine and tethered to the bankment.

Afterwards we climbed up the steps and emerged at ground level to find no traffic on the road and nobody on the pavement – except some gendarmes who came towards us. At that point motorcycle outriders appeared in echelon, leading a line of black



Citroens. On the twentieth anniversary of the Liberation, de Gaulle was on his way from Notre Dame to the sacred flame at the Arc de Triomphe, as described in *The Day of the Jackal*. Etienne realised roughly what was up, so as the cavalcade went past we both cheered and waved our swimming trunks. In reply The Great Man raised a cardboard-like arm – just for us.

My brush with greatness left me understandably intrigued by de Gaulle's association with Silcoates and the cup given to the school by the man voted in 2005 by his compatriots as the greatest Frenchman of all time. Not a bad trophy for Silcoates to possess, I thought. Except that after more than ten years as Headmaster I

had never seen it. Where was it?

Nobody seemed to know. Indeed, I couldn't find anyone who had even heard of it. Of course, perhaps it had been lost, *ie* pinched, in the intervening years. It surely hadn't been destroyed: the school hadn't burnt down since 1904. When I finally found it, it was resting, tarnished, dented and unregarded, in the company of redundant pots such as the Under 14 Boxing Cup.

Happily restored to prominence and to good condition, it now appears every year. On Speech Day the winner of the Senior French Prize is given not only an improving book but also the de Gaulle Cup – which is afterwards appropriated by the assiduous deputy head and locked safely in the trophy cabinet.

*Paul Spillane was Headmaster of Silcoates School from 1991 to 2008.*

## HERE & THERE

If you have news of topical interest, however brief, for 'Here and There', please email it to Dr Stephen Coyne at [head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk](mailto:head.kingsmac@rmpkc.co.uk). Items should not exceed 150 words. Good colour photographs are also welcome.

### Pupils pledge their support to the Pope

Six pupils from Mount St Mary's College were chosen to join the Pope for a historic celebration event during his Papal visit to the UK. The students were invited to join his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Big Assembly, as part of the inauguration of the John Paul II Foundation for Sport at St Mary's Catholic University College, Twickenham.

Helen Chapman, Harry Chapman, Joe Tetley, Kit Watts, Erin Williams and Elisabeth Massarella from Mount St Mary's College, were selected for the ticket-only event, making a pledge to the Pope. They were chosen because of their sporting excellence and commitment to the college. Year 8 pupil Erin Williams is a member of the GB Equestrian Team and Joe Tetley, Year 11, represents Yorkshire County Cricket Club.

The event celebrated Catholic education in the UK and the proceedings followed the format of a school assembly, with hymns, prayers, a religious blessing and an address from the Pope.

"It was inspiring to see so many young people from all over the country joining together to celebrate the theme of 'living life to the full' whilst praising those who help provide safe environments for children to learn in," said Laurence McKell, Headmaster at Mount St Mary's College.

"We were honoured that our students were invited to this historic event in celebration of the Catholic religion. The students all had a memorable experience and felt inspired to achieve their goals."

# Swanning around

## Latymer Upper's inter-continental balletic missions

On Monday, 14th June, 20 Latymer Upper School students joined over 100 young people from secondary schools in the UK and China to take centre stage at the Royal Albert Hall. The boys and girls, from Years 7 to 10, were participating in *Swanning Around*, a unique dance performance, inspired by Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.

The project, which began almost 18 months earlier, was a collaboration between the Royal Albert Hall, English National Ballet and WebPlay. An inspirational cross-cultural dance education project, it offered pupils huge opportunities to dance and perform, but it has also helped them to learn about other cultures, fostering inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between young people in China and the UK through the shared language and love of dance.

Five schools across the UK were invited to take part and the project was mirrored by four groups in China (Shanghai, Hong Kong, Beijing and Jiangsu) who worked with Shanghai Ballet using the same process and with the same goal. On 14th June a contingent of ten Chinese pupils shared the stage at the Royal Albert Hall and, in September, ten British students travelled to Shanghai to take part in the Shanghai Expo 2010 as part of UK National Day.

Whilst dance has been the principal focus of the project, cross-cultural links have been put in place from the very beginning. Throughout the rehearsal process British and Chinese pupils have been communicating through videos, photos and email to share and compare their experiences of the choreography and rehearsals.

Dance was introduced at Latymer four years ago and, since then, pupil participation has gone from strength to strength. It is a sports option for Year 11 and sixth form students and many boys and girls opt to learn the tango, hip-hop or how to waltz or jive. Latymer has its own dance studio in the recently-opened performing arts centre, equipped with mirrored walls and a specially sprung floor.

The official opening was marked by a performance in the studio by two dancers from English National Ballet – Principal Arianel Vargas and Senior Principal Elena Glurdjidze. In January 2009, students put on *Strictly Latymer*. Sixth formers auditioned to take part, with half a dozen couples dancing in the finals in front of staff playing the roles of judges. *Strictly* was a huge success, raising a very good sum for charity and offering an evening of unrivalled entertainment.

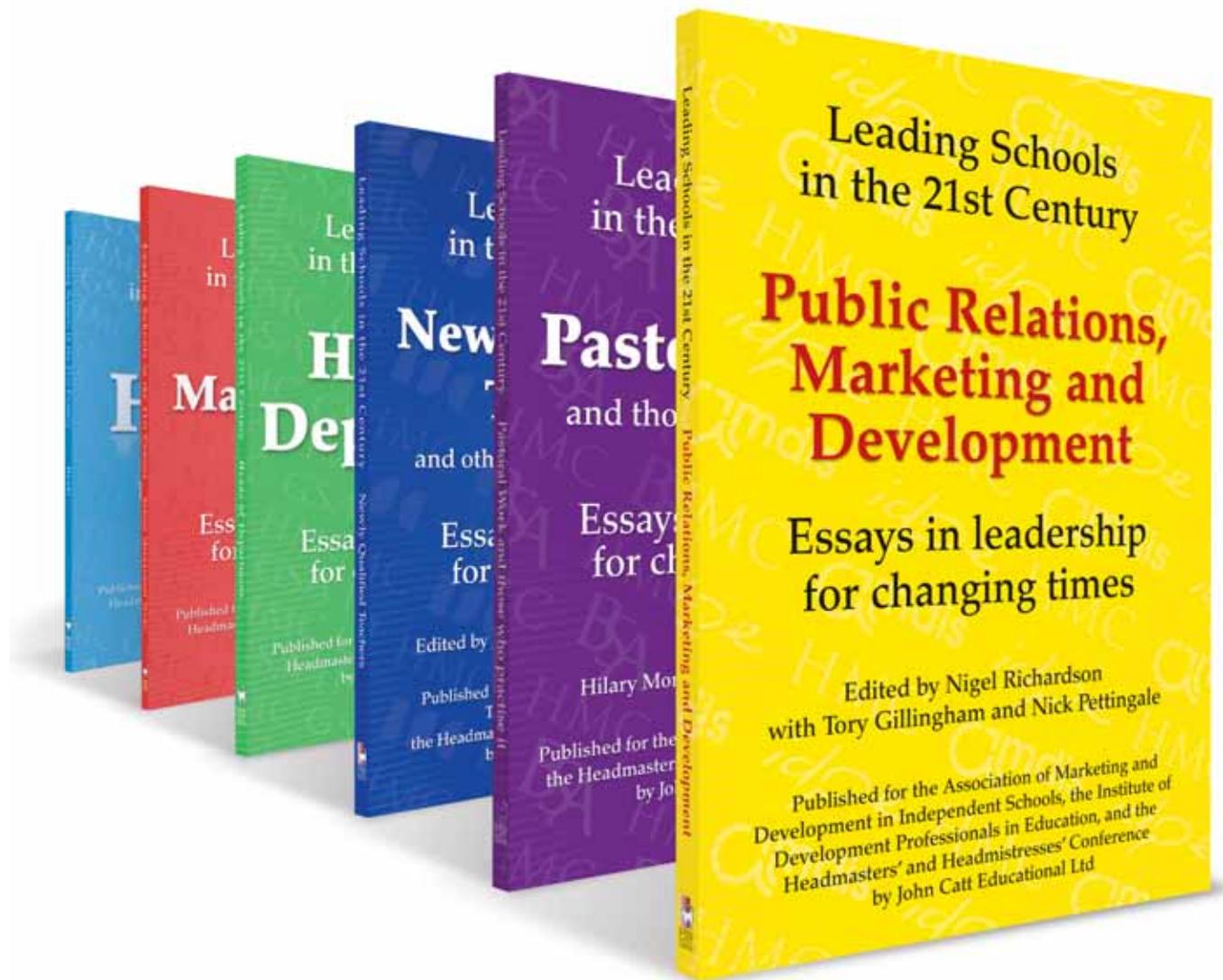
In *Swanning Around*, each school was given a specific character and scene to work on and Latymer performed the role of the



Prince. Students worked alongside a professional dance artist, Melanie Teall-Ingram (formerly of Rambert Dance Company) with specially commissioned music from Sally Greaves. On the evening of the performance, each group performed their own dance piece, followed by a grand finale choreographed by English National Ballet soloist Jenna Lee, bringing together 130 young performers. The music for this was arranged by Gavin Sutherland and provided by the orchestra of English National Ballet.

All students in Years 7 to 10 were invited to audition for this project. They were required to have some previous dance experience, but not necessarily either balletic or extensive. Those taking part ranged from boys who have already played parts on the West End stage to boys and girls who have had ballet training and those who have had little dance training but show ability, commitment and enthusiasm.

From the start of the academic year in September, the students dancing in *Swanning Around* rehearsed twice a week, fitting in long hours of dance around school work, other commitments and end-of-year exams. They received 40 hours of free dance tuition from their choreographer on top of their own rehearsals.



## Leading Schools in the 21st Century

# Public Relations, Marketing and Development

Twenty-six writers provide a wealth of practical experience of public relations, marketing and development in schools, including PR in a crisis; the media at our disposal; the marketing and admissions department; market research and strategic planning; branding and key messages; initial enquiries, open days, and personal visits; retention and recruitment of sixth-formers; the marketing of boarding; the admissions department; the development office; alumni relations; relationship fundraising; managing expectations; formulating the strategic plan; successful event management; making the big ask; fundraising tactics; the annual fund; and legacy campaigns to former pupils.

Edited by Dr Nigel Richardson, Head of the Perse School, Cambridge, from 1994 to 2008, with Tory Gillingham, General Secretary of the Association for Marketing and Development in Independent Schools (AMDIS), and Nick Pettingale, Chairman of the Institute of Development Professionals in Education.

YOU CAN ORDER COPIES FOR YOUR COLLEAGUES NOW

direct from the publishers

John Catt Educational Ltd, 12 Deben Mill Business Centre,  
Old Maltings Approach, Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1BL, UK.

Telephone: 01394 389850 Email: [enquiries@johncatt.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@johncatt.co.uk)

Price £12.50 plus p&p

DISCOUNTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR BULK ORDERS

Copies of the other three books in the series, **Heads**, **Senior Management Teams**, **Heads of Department**, **Newly Qualified Teachers** and **Pastoral Work**, are also still available

Their enthusiasm for dance, and for the project specifically, was tangible and they were understandably excited at the prospect of dancing in a unique venue in front of a huge audience.

The rehearsals meant lots of hard work and commitment, but the process was exciting and challenging and the sessions not only taught pupils the value of team work but also increased pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Their spatial awareness and creative input also improved markedly in response to the rigorous demands of the rehearsals.

The cross-cultural opportunities offered by this project have been hugely beneficial to the pupils who have participated enthusiastically in the fortnightly internet sessions – documenting rehearsals, communicating with their Chinese e-pals and researching the ballet *Swan Lake* – and been excited to see the photos of the Chinese partner school and learn about Chinese traditions.

The pupils looked forward to the final performance with great expectation along with some natural feelings of nervousness. When they visited the Albert Hall for the first time, they were both thrilled and overawed at the sheer size of the Hall. All have enjoyed the new friendships offered by this experience, both here and in China, a unique opportunity for our young people, and we hope that in the future more links will develop between Latymer and our Chinese counterpart.

The final stage of this balletic odyssey saw two Year 11 Latymer students, Matteo Del Maestro and Anna Wirszycz,

together with their teacher Barbara Dutrieu, travel to China to take part in a performance at the Shanghai Expo in early September. They all missed the first few days of term, but the trip more than made up for that disappointment!

The performance in Shanghai on 8th September was the curtain raiser to a joint performance of *Swan Lake* by the English National Ballet and the Shanghai Ballet. After three days of rehearsals in Shanghai learning a newly choreographed piece, the pupils travelled to the World Expo site to perform in the Great Hall in the presence of HRH Prince Andrew, Duke of York, the UK ambassador to China and members of the Chinese government and 2500 invited guests.

Following the performance, the group was given a VIP private tour of the British pavilion and met Prince Andrew. The students and their teacher had amazing experiences in China; they had insight into the working of a ballet company and witnessed their inspirational teaching.

They had the privilege of collaborating closely with Chinese teachers and students and getting to know them. They discovered a city of amazing contrasts and saw a people whose traditional lifestyle has been overturned by the arrival of western influences. It was the trip of a lifetime and hopefully the beginnings of further cross cultural links with China.

*Catriona Sutherland-Hawes.  
Pictures taken by Belinda Lawley of  
English National Ballet.*





*Gallic's* personnel have over 20 years experience to offer in Design & Build of educational projects, including classrooms, Science Laboratories, Pre-Prep Units and Sports Halls.

To find out more about our total "In House" design and construction package, or to arrange a "No Commitment" visit to discuss your next project, please call us.

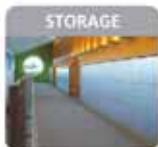
*Gallic Construction Limited, Unit 10, Pond Farm, Godstone Road, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6JG*

**T: 01342 835587 F: 01342 835590**

**E: sales@gallic-construction.co.uk W: www.gallic-construction.co.uk**

### A Complete Service

- Free Consultation Service
- Cabinet Vision Design/Planning
- Extensive In House Stock
- CNC Manufacturing Technology
- Experienced/Skilled Assembly Technicians
- Delivery and Installation Service
- Environmentally Friendly Policies
- On-Going Support Programme



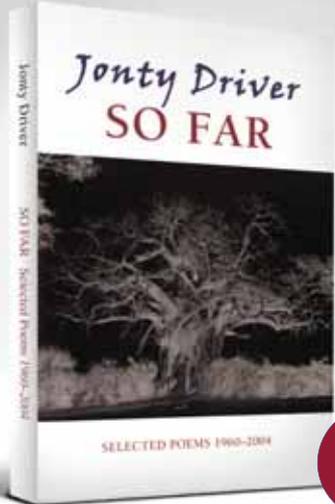
www.witleyjones.com



FURNITURE

Witley Jones Furniture Ltd. Beech House, Barracks Road,  
Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport-on-Severn, Worcs. DY13 9QA  
T: 01299 828888 F: 01299 828989 E: sales@witleyjones.com







## Jonty Driver

### SO FAR Selected Poems 1960-2004

“...a compelling read, infused with an immense generosity of spirit that is both uplifting and beguiling.”

*David Caddy, Conference & Common Room*

To order your copy call **01394 389850**

If you would like Jonty Driver to come to your school to read his poetry, please contact John Catt Educational Ltd on enquiries@johncatt.co.uk

**www.johncattbookshop.com**

# Plymouth Rock, not Northern Rock

## The College's decade of success in business and finance competitions

With the popularity of TV programmes like *The Apprentice* and *Dragon's Den*, business competitions have really come into their own in the last couple of years.

Plymouth College has been on this particular bandwagon not only for the last few years, but the last decade, and has proved to be pretty good at it with ten national and 58 regional competition wins under its belt. One of the early successes was in 2003 when lower sixth pupil Tom Dinham was named Business Writer of the Year for his 1500-word essay on the Indian carpet-making industry.

The following year 'Reservoir Stags' took the first of the school's Student Investor titles, after making a 63% gain on a fantasy share portfolio. The sixth form team was delighted with their cash prize and trip to New York.

The CIMA Management Competition has been a particular favourite, with the school winning the national title in 2005 – with the added bonus of the B team coming third – winning again in 2007 and 2008, building up from their runners-up spot in 2004. For the 2005 competition, the team had to write a 5000-word business plan for a multi-function sports shoe. The plan had to include a profit and loss account, balance sheet, cash flow forecast, market analysis, launch marketing plan, recommendations for staff resources and key performance indicators. By the end of the presentation and the rigorous question-and-answer session, the team really felt they had earned their iPods and cash prizes!

In the last 18 months success has come thick and fast, starting in July 2009 with Plymouth College team Affinity taking the national Young Enterprise title with an innovative book of family-friendly walks, *Prambles*. A few months later another Plymouth College team secured victory in the national final of Make Your Mark with an idea for an online homework planner.

Next was second place in the Apprentice Challenge, which saw two girls devise a financial board game to be used as a teaching aid. This was followed in April 2010 by a trip to New York and £2000 for the school, the prize for beating 40,000 young people from across the UK to win Student Investor for a second time. Most recently a team calling themselves Ecovation has secured a meeting with *Dragon's Den's* Peter Jones after winning Make Your Mark (now called the Enterprise Challenge) for the second year running for the concept and business plan for an eco bird feeder.

Recent leaver Jessica Evans, 18, was in four competition teams and deputy managing director of Affinity. "The experience of doing the competitions was invaluable – the knowledge and skills that I gained along the way will stand me in good stead for the future," says Jessica. "With Young Enterprise in particular the whole team felt very passionate about the project. To see the initial idea transform into an



*Jonathan Shields, Secondary School Teacher of the Year,  
with Carol Vorderman.*

actual product really spurred us on and we were so proud to see *Prambles* at number six on the book list in Waterstones."

Plymouth College Economics and Business Studies teacher Jonathan Shields is the driving force behind the school's competition success. "We are very passionate about ensuring the financial capability of our students", says Jonathan. "The current economic climate demonstrates more than ever the need for financial literacy amongst young people and participation in these competitions really helps them to put the theory into practice."

And the school's theory on this subject is just as successful as its participation in national competitions. Since 2002, Plymouth College has seen its pupils take the top mark in the country in Edexcel's economics and business studies A level no less than seven times, while it has clinched the same accolade for GCSE three times and the diploma in financial studies twice. The number of pupils who have scored a top 20 mark in public examinations in this subject now exceeds 40.

As a result of the school's success at A level and GCSE, Jonathan was commissioned to co-author a textbook, teachers' guide and interactive CD-Rom for the 2010 GCSE business syllabus. He has just been commissioned by Anforme Ltd to produce an A level textbook.

And then there are the awards. Jessica was short-listed for an Unbelievable Woman in Business Award and received an Outstanding Achievement Award from Devon Young Enterprise. Jonathan also received a Devon Young Enterprise Award and claimed the Enterprise South West Award for Overall Contribution to Enterprise Education.

The icing on the cake was his Royal Air Force Secondary School Teacher of the Year Award (South West). Not to be left out, Plymouth College itself has won two School of Finance Excellence Awards and was one of three short-listed for the Royal Bank of Scotland Personal Finance Education Provider of the Year.

So, what next? Well, considering the current Young Enterprise team took nearly £1000 and sold out of their stock in a day at the Plymouth Christmas Market, the start of the next ten years looks very promising!

*Stephi Baker is the communications  
manager at Plymouth College.*



## SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

*Conference and common room* is published three times a year – January, May and September. Single copies cost £4.17. Two year subscriptions covering six issues cost £25.00. Special terms are given for bulk orders, as below. Please fill in the number of subscriptions required and the total amount payable.

	<i>No. of Subscription required</i>	<i>Total amount</i>
1-4	two year subscriptions @£25.00 each .....	£ .....
5-9	two year subscriptions @£22.20 each .....	£ .....
10-19	two year subscriptions @£20.28 each .....	£ .....
20 or more	two year subscriptions @£18.48 each .....	£ .....

Cheques should be made payable to **John Catt Educational Limited** and sent to the address below. *(Block Capitals please)*

Cheque for £..... enclosed Signed ..... Date .....

Name .....

Address .....

..... Postcode.....

To which Association(s) does the school belong ?.....  
(eg IAPS, SATIPS, GSA, HMC etc)

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM WHEN COMPLETED, WITH YOUR CHEQUE, TO:**  
**John Catt Educational Limited**  
**12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach**  
**Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1BL**

# Show and tell – sharing best practice

## Equal opportunities for teachers and learners to benefit

The skills of UK secondary school teachers and their positive effect on young people's lives will be celebrated and rewarded under a new scheme called O2 Learn, launched in November 2010.

This innovative education project is supported by the NUT, Teach First, The Teaching Awards, Teaching Leaders and Parentline Plus, and seven founder schools – Claires Court, Dr Challoner's Grammar School, Eton College, Langley Academy, Slough and Eton Church of England Business and Enterprise College, Wardle High School, Rochdale and Wellington College – whose teachers kick-started the site.

Kate Richardson, who was interviewed in *C&CR* in 2008 about working in the Teach First scheme, has been involved in the O2 Learn project which she introduces below:

'O2 Learn is a free, moderated video-sharing website for teachers to up-load their favourite lessons and share them with millions of secondary school students throughout the country.

'The website invites students revising for exams, or wanting to catch up on missed lessons, to go online and search for great short videos on topics of their choice. These micro-lessons are provided by some of the thousands of inspiring teachers who teach in our classrooms every day.

'O2 Learn aims to celebrate UK teaching talent, and the ever-growing selection of lessons will become a rolling teaching resource – a place for teachers to inspire and share a huge range of teaching styles and approaches. Working with our partners, we hope to create a lasting learning resource that will become the place for teachers to inspire and share teaching styles and approaches to learning.

'And we want to celebrate teachers too – with an award fund of over £300,000 for the best lessons. Every fortnight, from November 2010 until July 2011, the most watched and best-rated lessons will win £2000 for the teacher and £2000 for his or her school. There will be 18 such awards totaling £72,000.

'In addition, O2 Learn will assemble an expert panel, including members of teaching unions and inspirational Head Teachers, to shortlist eight of the 18 fortnightly winners to go through to a grand final in the autumn of 2011 where, with the help of the public, they will decide on the winning three UK teachers.

'The winner of the O2 Learn award will receive £50,000 and a further £100,000 for his/her school. The runner up will win £20,000 and £40,000 for the school, and a third prize will also be awarded of £10,000 for the teacher with £20,000 for the school.'

Gav Thompson, creator of O2 Learn, said: "The best teaching inspires young people and changes lives. O2 connects people

to the people and things that matter to them. O2 wants to bring together the best teachers in the UK with the millions of young people that want access to the best teaching.

"That's why O2 Learn will provide a significant fund to reward and recognise our very best teachers over this academic year.

"Their lessons will be accessible for free to all students, whatever their background and aspirations. O2 Learn will create a lasting learning resource that can help young people realise their ambitions."

Siôn Humphreys, Assistant Secretary (Secondary) at the National Association of Head Teachers said: "O2 Learn is a simple idea with huge potential, as recognised by its greatly respected partners in the education sector. Head teachers and school leadership teams do a great deal to support, develop and celebrate the contributions of their teachers, and encouraging them to contribute and reflect on O2 Learn's content will benefit schools, teachers and students alike."

Dr Anthony Seldon, Master of Wellington College, comments: "We are committed at Wellington to making our teaching available, using all possible means, to both our pupils and to other pupils around the UK and the world. We see O2 Learn as one way to help us achieve this and are very proud to be one of the founder schools."

Julie Holden, assistant head teacher, Wardle High School, Rochdale, said: "Our teachers are incredibly enthusiastic to be involved with O2 Learn – using simple technology to great effect. The site is hugely engaging for teachers and students alike as it has independent learning at its core. We're very proud to be one of the founder schools."

O2 Learn is part of O2's Think Big strategy, which seeks to inspire young people, and those that help young people, to make a positive change to the community. O2 Learn recognises the crucial role of education and the teaching profession in young people's lives, providing them with the skills to make their communities better places.

Finally, Kate Richardson has a direct appeal to the readers of *C&CR*: "We're incredibly excited about O2 Learn and the feedback from the teachers and pupils so far is tremendously positive. But we're still only in the 'beta' stage and our next step is to encourage the creation of content with the support of people like you."

# BH &M

SPECIALISTS IN DESIGN, BUILDING AND  
ESTATE MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS

We offer the full range of architectural skills including:

Project Design	Building Technology
Interiors	Management
Perspective Art	Master Planning

We design in sympathy with the environment  
Respect the quality of the existing architectural fabric  
Use proven materials and current building technology

We work with the client to meet the brief  
Provide aesthetic and functional buildings  
Provide buildings with long life and low maintenance



**BH&M CHARTERED ARCHITECTS**

1 White Hart Lane, London, SW13 0RA. Tel: 020 8878 4667 Fax: 020 8878 8907  
www.bhmarchitects.com

professional  
edu-cation  
training and inst

**haysmacintyre**  
chartered accountants & tax advisers

## independent accountants for independent schools

With over 100 independent and state-maintained schools across the UK as clients, haysmacintyre is a leading adviser in the sector.

In addition to audit, tax and VAT services, our schools look to us for help in other matters:

- mergers
- structuring of trading operations
- governor training and governance issues
- public benefit testing
- risk management
- regulatory matters
- employment issues
- banking arrangements

To find out more please contact partners David Sewell or Tracey Young

e: [dsewell@haysmacintyre.com](mailto:dsewell@haysmacintyre.com) | t: 020 7969 5568

e: [tyoung@haysmacintyre.com](mailto:tyoung@haysmacintyre.com) | t: 020 7969 5654

[www.haysmacintyre.com](http://www.haysmacintyre.com)

**Fairfax House**

**15 Fulwood Place**

**London WC1V 6AY**

**holroydhowe**  
INDEPENDENT

T 0118 935 6707  
E [info@holroydhowe.com](mailto:info@holroydhowe.com)  
[holroydhowe.com](http://holroydhowe.com)

Providing fresh food services  
to independent schools

Looking for a catering service that sets you apart?

We create a unique service for every client...  
*you are different, so are we!*

We respect the ingredients we work with and are  
committed to using fresh seasonal local produce.

For more information about the services we provide  
visit our website, call us directly or meet us in person.

Official Sponsor of the ISBA Annual Conference,  
Celtic Manor, 2011.

**FEEDING THE FUTURE**



## Who wants to save the school money?

Installing a **powerPerfactor**,  
helped a school in  
South Wales cut its  
carbon footprint  
and save over  
£12,000 on its  
annual energy bill.

That's half an NQT.

Call **0845 601 472**  
[www.powerperfector.com](http://www.powerperfector.com)

 **power  
Perfactor**  
energy saving like no other

# Over Schooled but Under Educated

John Abbott with Heather  
MacTaggart  
Continuum Books;  
ISBN 978-1-85539-623-4

For those of us involved in the education of adolescents, this is a book well worth reading. That includes parents.

John Abbott was the Headmaster of Alleyne's School, Stevenage, then Director of Education 2000, which evolved into the 21st Century Learning Initiative. This book is the result of a collaboration with Heather MacTaggart, the Executive Director of Classrooms Connection in Canada.

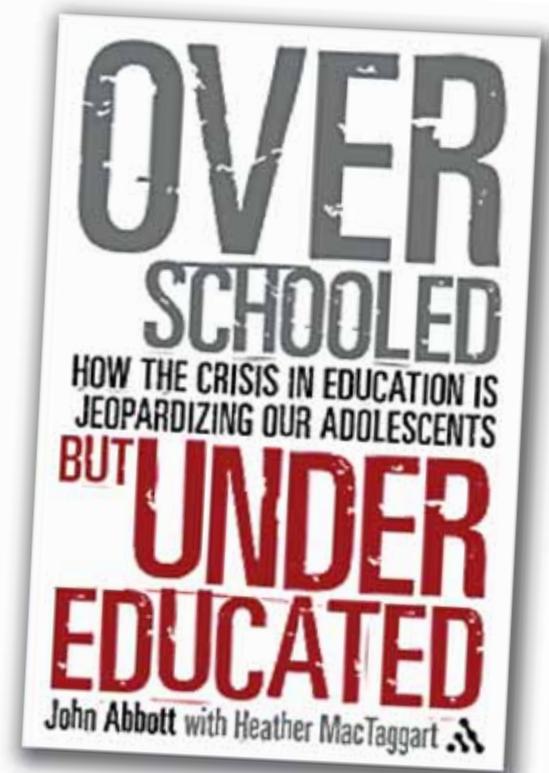
In the introduction the authors state their task as 'to synthesise an array of research from both the physical and social sciences to ... contribute to a better understanding of human learning, especially as this relates to adolescence'. They also helpfully suggest that 'some readers may wish to speed-read chapter 5 and much of chapter 6 so as to get to the meat of the argument from chapter 7 onwards'.

The scientific basis of their thesis is expounded in the earlier chapters. There is a comprehensive overview of the current state of research on how the brain develops. For instance, whereas most mammals have a brain 95% developed at the time of birth, humans give birth when the brain is only about 40% fully formed; hence the need for an education process that takes account of how the brain develops.

The authors rightly lay a heavy responsibility for this with the parents. The important assertion is that we probably learn best by working alongside an expert. They describe the value of tribal rituals derived from the 'hunter gatherers', apprenticeship and formal education with a high proportion of experiential learning.

Chapters 5 and 6 give a succinct and very useful overview of the history of how the English education system has developed: from the 1870 Act (to provide education for all); to 1902 (limiting elementary education to pupils below the age of 14); 1944 (introducing Grammar, Technical and Modern schools from the age of 11); to 1965 (Circular 10/65 giving local authorities the freedom to establish Comprehensive Schools); 1988 (Kenneth Baker's 'Great Education Reform Act'); and 2003 (Every Child Matters).

The core arguments of the book are in chapter 7, entitled 'Adolescents left out'. They argue that young people are 'caught up in the vortex of ... a whirling mass of conflicting expectations and aspirations'. The thesis emerges that maybe schools have struggled and failed to provide appropriate simulation of real-life situations; enabling pupils to learn from



experts doing a job; and by being allowed to make mistakes from which they learn.

It is at this point (now in chapter 8) that a definition of adolescence would be most helpful. But that enigma remains unsolved. Reference to the latest research in neurobiology gives clues to how the brain develops and absorbs learning; and the adolescent brain is still at a formative stage. What Abbott and MacTaggart assert is that we must learn to 'go with the grain of the brain'. Herein, perhaps, lies a clue to the thinking of the authors.

John Abbott was raised, until he went to boarding school at the age of 13, in a 'large decaying Victorian vicarage in Southsea'. A retired naval stoker helped the family doing odd-jobs and taught the young Abbott to sharpen his chisels and carve miniature figureheads. He learnt from watching and working with an expert.

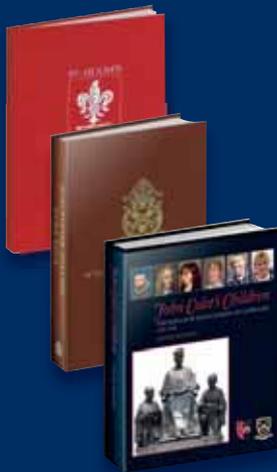
This is reminiscent of David Hargreaves who, in his book *The challenge for the comprehensive school*, talks of the feeling of inadequacy of the academically-inclined in a woodwork class, as well as the equally frustrating experience of the practically-inclined in a Latin class. Or perhaps of Primo Levi in *The Periodic Table*, struggling with the woodwork skills necessary to build a bench, and learning a whole new aspect of learning and skill development.

And so to the title. The current Secretary of State is reported to be keen on more 'didactic schooling and discipline'. Others see the way forward in an increase in independent learning and working closely with experts who are sharing the task. This book contributes to that debate and is worthy of a place in the common room library. There is a comprehensive and very useful bibliography.

*Michael Pipes was Headmaster of a very large inner-city comprehensive school and then The Master of Warminster School. He is a governor of The Portsmouth Grammar School.*

# GRESHAM BOOKS

Bespoke publishing for schools



Capture your school's unique character with a bespoke project.

- School Hymn Books
- School Histories
- School Companions
- Leavers' Books
- Poetry Collections
- Prayer Books

Call us today to discuss your project.



[www.gresham-books.co.uk](http://www.gresham-books.co.uk)

01580 767596 • [info@gresham-books.co.uk](mailto:info@gresham-books.co.uk)

## STEM Days

Educational charity The Smallpeice Trust runs in-school STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) activity days designed to enhance Year 8 and 9 students' aptitude for problem-solving, creativity, design and engineering.

### Benefits to teachers:

Easy to organise, teachers can choose full or half day workshops that complement the national curriculum and fit nicely into the school day. There is a choice of 'design and make' projects offering students the chance to break away from their usual routine to work on exciting projects that really stretch the imagination!

Groups of 50 pupils work together in small teams on 'design and make' activities.

- Communication Tower
- Bridge Building
- Wind Turbine
- Propelled Glider
- Supercapacitor Powered Vehicle

STEM Days cost £595 plus travel expenses. Hotel and meal expenses may be applicable depending on location.

Call 01926 333200 to book your day.

[www.smallpeicetrust.org.uk](http://www.smallpeicetrust.org.uk)



Holly House, 74 Upper Holly Walk, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4JL  
T: 01926 333200 F: 01926 333202  
E: [gen@smallpeicetrust.org.uk](mailto:gen@smallpeicetrust.org.uk) [www.smallpeicetrust.org.uk](http://www.smallpeicetrust.org.uk)



[WWW.GLION.EDU](http://WWW.GLION.EDU)



- Among the **top 3 Hospitality Management schools in the world** for an international career (TNS, UK, 2007)
- Graduating students receive an **average of 3 job offers**
- Great career opportunities worldwide

### Bachelor Degrees in:

- Hotel Management
- Hospitality Management
- Events Management
- Sport & Entertainment Management
- Tourism Management

Next Intakes: July 2011 & January 2012

For further information or to apply, contact:

Marcus Burnett / + 44 (0) 7794 848939 / [laureate-uk@triagonal.net](mailto:laureate-uk@triagonal.net)



[WWW.LESROCHES.EDU](http://WWW.LESROCHES.EDU)

## CReSTeD

How good is your provision for dyslexic pupils?  
We exist to help you find out, and then we tell parents.

We offer:

- for your school a visit by a dyslexia expert;
- for parents a free Register of schools approved for their dyslexia provision.

Contact CReSTeD on  
**01242 604852**

[admin@crested.org.uk](mailto:admin@crested.org.uk) [www.crested.org.uk](http://www.crested.org.uk)

Registered charity Number 1052103  
Council for the Registration of Schools Teaching Dyslexic Pupils

# Conference & common room

For more details on advertising in C&CR magazine contact:

### John Catt Educational Ltd

12 Deben Mill Business Centre, Old Maltings Approach,  
Melton, Woodbridge IP12 1BL

Email: [sales@johncatt.com](mailto:sales@johncatt.com) Website [www.johncatt.com](http://www.johncatt.com)

Tel: +44 (0)1394 389855 Fax: +44 (0) 1394 386893

# HMC's new international members



**Dr Christian Barkei**  
BIS Jakarta



**Elaine Blas**  
King's College Madrid



**Peter Derby-Crook**  
Tanglin Trust



**Bradley Fenner**  
King's College,  
New Zealand



**Mark Leppard**  
Doha College,  
Qatar



**Derek Pringle**  
St George's College,  
Argentina



**Dr Matthew Sullivan**  
BIS Bangalore



# Teaching and the Seven Deadly Sins: Envy

Alistair Macnaughton reports on a day in the life of an HMC Superhead

*Alistair Macnaughton*

Time spent dozing after the alarm is time wasted as far as I am concerned. When my eyes snap open at 6am, it's my usual 'fix' of star jumps and sit ups until the last bars of Vivaldi's *Quattro stagioni* tell me it's time for my muesli and cranberries.

My old tutor at Keble used to paraphrase Euripides in saying: "Know first who you are, and then dress accordingly." Having eight identical blue Hermes suits, 16 Lanvin shirts and, even if others say it, a stunning range of Duchamps ties, rather takes the fun out of choosing – but it's the classical look you want to show your prospectives, especially the mothers. After all, if you're charging £30,000 a year, you don't want to be dressed like Anthony Seldon – and as for Bernard Trafford, well, don't get me started...

It's a five minute walk from my little seafront hideaway to the school, though I usually do it in three. Then it's open door time for an hour, which is when anyone (even the cleaners if they wish) can drop in to see me unannounced, just me and them and a couple of lattes between us. To be honest, it's been some time since anyone *has* dropped in, but it's the thought that counts, isn't it?

After Chapel, which I usually lead with some aphoristic pearl, it's down to the daily grind... At the moment I'm actually doing the GCSE Swahili course along with all the other foot soldiers in the lower remove and Tibetan philosophy with a very bright sixth form set, most of whom – I'm glad to say – are completely unfazed by having the Headmaster in their little clan.

I also like to look in on one of the new courses I've introduced this year. Nothing could be simpler than having our fifth form drop two GCSEs to do 'Climb Every Mountain: the Challenge of Contemporary Cohabitation' – a rich and eclectic mix of sexual politics, gestalt psychology, PSHE and good old-fashioned relationship counselling. You can see that they're enjoying it *hugely*, and whilst I won't deny that introducing it did cause a ripple or two in the parental pond, the coverage in the broadsheets has been *substantial*.

In the latter part of the morning I usually have meetings, though my PAs (I have three working in strict rotation) are under instruction to shunt people out after 15 minutes. Last week a *very* famous TV actor (father of a rather dowdy prospective) asked me so many irritating questions about A level media studies that one of them had to set off the fire alarm, but if anyone can appreciate that Time is Money and Money is Time it ought to be a fully paid-up member of Equity.

If I don't feel like being nobbled in the lunch queue by the head of maths, I might have someone bring up a simple tray from the school carvery for my lunch, or, if I need a change of air, I might drop in on the sixth form centre café for a brie and apricot panini. One of the best decisions I ever made was to fire the dreadful husband and wife who used to run it (for decades) and put it out to tender to – how shall I put it? – commercial concerns... If I told you how much our little café is making, it would make you positively green. Suffice it to say, it pretty much pays the salary of the rapper in residence.

After lunch, it's admin time, at least theoretically, though it's a rare afternoon when Sian (Griffiths) or Graeme (Paton) or one of their flunkies from *The Times* or *Telegraph* isn't after a quote. Last week a motley crew from the *Tatler* actually arrived on the doorstep without an appointment, but PA number three got rid of them after they'd taken a few snaps of the Georgian bits and pieces in my office.

Actually, by far the best bit of my afternoon admin time is when I send out some of my handwritten cards to kids who've enjoyed some little triumph. It's amazing how a few words of praise from the Headmaster can lighten the gloom – and it does show them I care which, as I like all my staff to know, I most definitely do.

If there isn't a play, a concert or some other event at which I have to press the parental flesh there are always memos and articles to write, or the odd call to make to some poor fellow Head who gets a lift from hearing what we're up to. Then it's five minutes speed-reading the Orange Prize longlist to stimulate my night-thinking ... and bed.

Occasionally someone at HMC will express surprise, when they first meet me, that someone can be a Head and so unblemished at 33. There are others, too, who are clearly a little green-eyed about how much I earn (which is, in fact, a *very* low six figure sum), or that I lead one of the most high profile schools in the country and that I am not so much dragging it kicking and screaming as moving it *seamlessly* into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Who better, after all, to work with the young than someone with a contemporary cutting edge profile? I may be the Headmaster but, as you can tell from the spirited way the kids shout at me as I pass by from the top windows of the sixth form centre, I am also their *friend*.

*Alistair Macnaughton, 51¾, is happy to confess to the sin of Envy as he contemplates this entirely fictitious colleague.*

# Do you want your school to be seen worldwide?

John Catt publishes a range of comprehensive guides, backed by [www.schoolsearch.co.uk](http://www.schoolsearch.co.uk) and [www.which-school.co.uk](http://www.which-school.co.uk) to suit all schools and all markets



To learn more about taking space in our guides:

Telephone: 01394 389850 Email: [enquires@johncatt.com](mailto:enquires@johncatt.com)

[www.johncatt.com](http://www.johncatt.com)

# time to Engage



**Imagine a world where all your school information is accurate, available and always presented exactly as you want it.**

With Engage from Double First, you will be free to run your school with full confidence that the information you need is always at your fingertips.

Engage will make your life easier, whether you access it from school, home or abroad.

**Creating innovative and intuitive software for independent schools since 1987.**

Call us on **+44 (0)1935 40 30 20**  
or visit **www.doublefirst.com**

**double first**   
MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS